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NOVELS

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SERGEANT WESTON
UPHOLDS THE LAW IN
**"BEYOND
THE BARRENS"**

by
T. LUND

ALSO

**"THE SNUBLINE
SNAKE"**

by
J. ALLAN DUNN



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Real **NORTHWEST** *ADVENTURES*

2 COMPLETE NOVELS

Yearly Subscription, 75c

June, 1937, Issue

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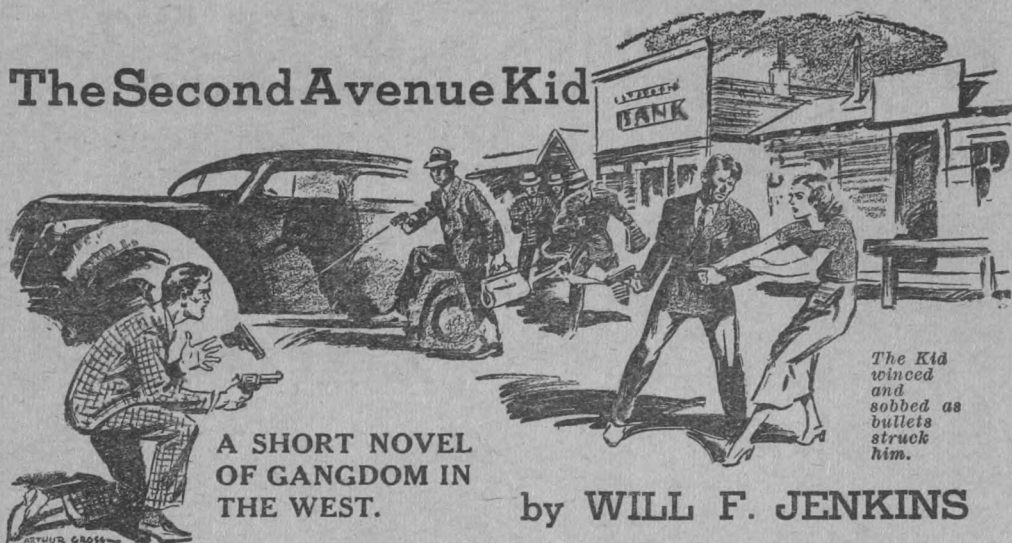


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The Second Avenue Kid



A SHORT NOVEL
OF GANGDOM IN
THE WEST.

by WILL F. JENKINS

The Kid
winced
and
sobbed as
bullets
struck
him.

ARE YOU a member of—the Swell Mob?" asked the girl evenly.

The Kid's nostrils quivered, as if he were laughing unpleasantly to himself.

"I'd be a fool t' admit it, wouldn't I?" he asked drily.

The girl moistened her lips. It seemed as if her next question were dictated by a very faint hope rather than by any belief.

"You aren't a detective?"

The Kid laughed openly.

"Not hardly," he said amusedly. "No, not hardly a dick!"

"You—wiped blood off my hand," the girl said suddenly. "I would have been arrested if that had been seen. I'm—grateful to you for wiping it off and trying to keep me from knowing about it. But—you'd better go away, I think. Nobody has asked you any questions,

yet. But they'll think about your being shot, and that you were the first one to pass between the cars after the—man that was killed. They are going to suspect you, they are going to arrest you—"

"But nothin' worse than that," said the Kid. His eyes were suddenly mocking. "Lady, y'tippin' me to leave town. I'm tellin' you. Before I leave town there's goin' to be trouble poppin'. I'm advisin' you, earnest, to stay indoors as much as y' can for th' nex' few days. Especial, I'm advisin' you not to go near the bank—any time. As for that fly cop, instead of his gettin' me in trouble—"

The girl looked at him steadily, though her face was growing a trifle pale.

"What?"

"I'm arrangin'," said the Kid grimly, "so he's headin' for th' Pearly Gates at sixty miles an hour! An' I'm goin' to arrange it thorough!"

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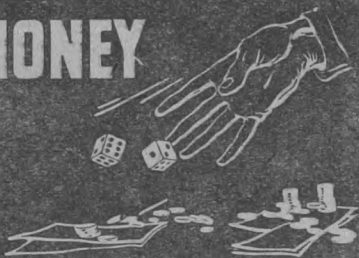
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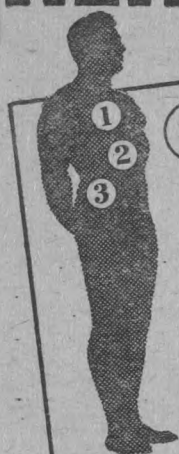
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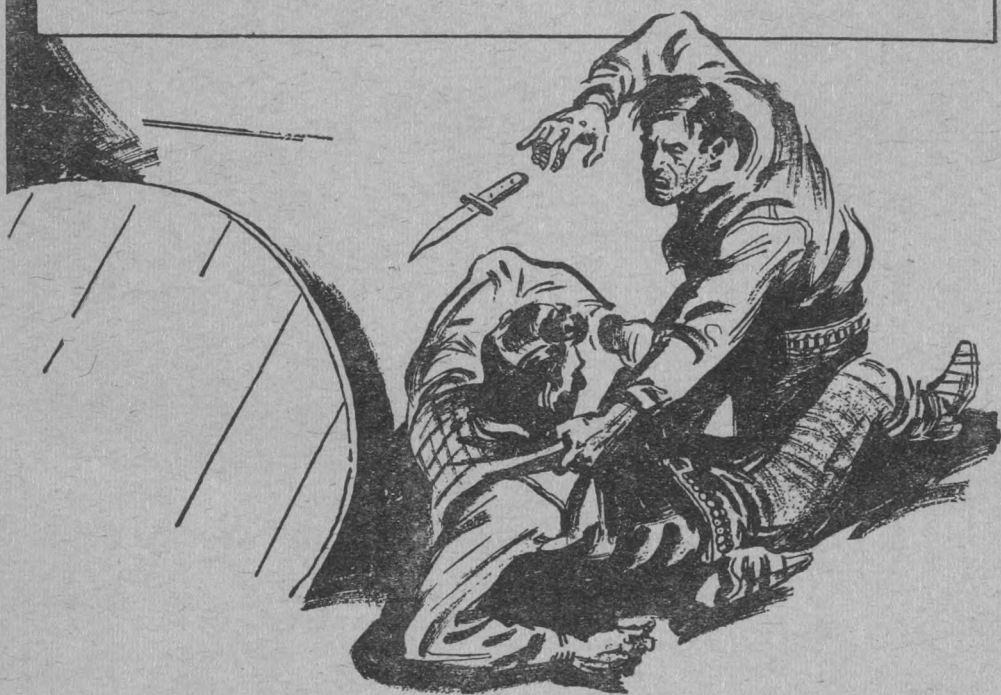
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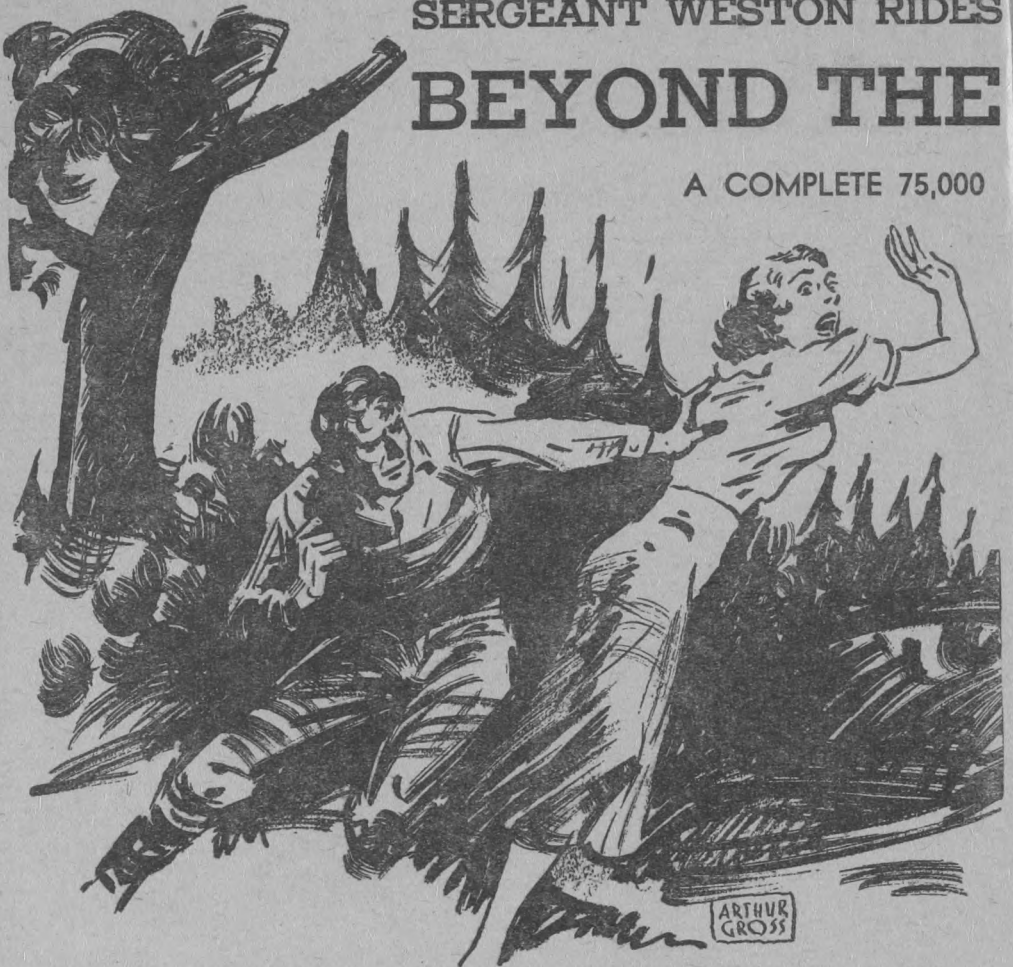
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CHAPTER I

IT WAS in the early hours of a summer morning at Portage Bend City. The little town, which was snugly tucked away amongst the tall spruces of the Northern Canadian forests, was just commencing to bestir itself. From the stove-pipes of the neat wooden houses white smoke rose lazily into the air, got agitated when it reached the soft breeze which came gently streaming down from the north over the tree-tops, and was gradually bent southwards, drifting away as a fine mist.

Across the blue sky slowly drifted a few white, woolly clouds, behind which the sun played bo-peep from time to time. The only sounds which broke the morning stillness were the distant whines of the saws at the Northern Lumber Company's mills, and the shrill whistling, and clanking of

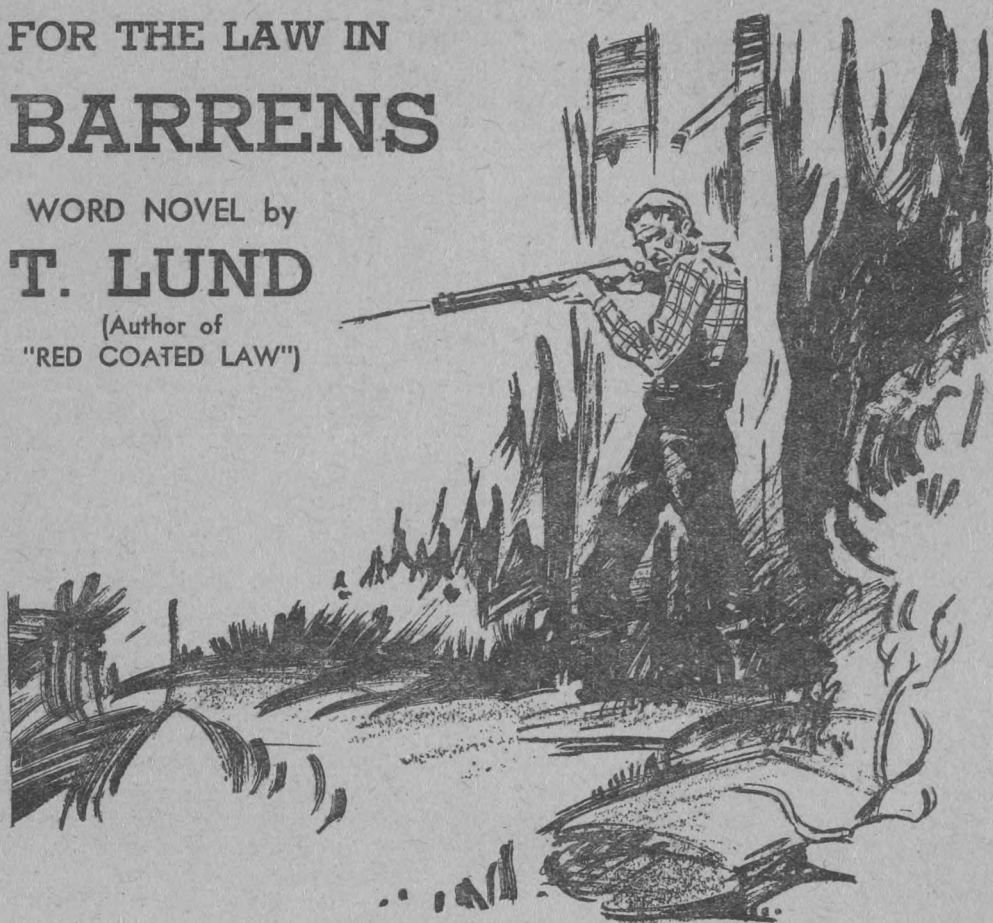
the bell, of a railway engine which was shunting down at the depot.

The town was situated on a level plateau overhanging the Saskatchewan River. A fairly steep, twenty-foot slope led down from the plateau to the low, flat river-bank, past which the wide expanse of water swept slowly and majestically.

Portage Bend was the hub and center of all activities in the district. Apart from the big lumber interests, there was a brisk transit of men and goods through the town, as it formed the terminus for one of those tentacles which the railway stretches out from its main lines from time to time, to help tapping the natural resources of the country. Consequently, the trails of trappers, prospectors, traders, and other wanderers of the North-Land converged towards this point. These transient free and easy individuals did not all possess the charac-

FOR THE LAW IN BARRENS

WORD NOVEL by
T. LUND
(Author of
"RED COATED LAW")



Strange and exciting things happen in the northwoods when Sergeant Weston and his chief-of-staff, Angus Mackenzie swing into action behind the sights of their rifles.

teristics which would tend to improve and purify the moral atmosphere of any place; and this had stamped Portage Bend to a certain degree. As one worthy citizen had once been heard to exclaim in a burst of civic pride: "I guess you c'n sin most as much right here in the Bend as in that there Paris where all them spicy stories come from."

On a street running parallel with Main Street, the chief artery of this northern metropolis, was situated a white, one-story building. A black sign-board with the legend R.N.W.M.P. painted thereon in white letters, and which was fastened over the door, proclaimed to all and sundry that here was one of the strongholds of

the Royal North-West Mounted Police. Around and inside the Barracks, as the building was popularly called, there was bustle and activity on this morning. Neatly-packed bundles and boxes were brought out by half-breeds, and carried rapidly in the direction of the river; while in the barrack-room further bundles and packages were still being made up. Anybody, observing these activities, would at once have jumped to the conclusion that some important drive was being launched against some enemies of law and order. But this conclusion would have been utterly erroneous, as the activities of the turbulent elements in the district had not lately been above normal. The simple truth was, that

Sergeant Weston was about to lose himself in the wilderness for his three months' leave; and the bundles, boxes, and packages were simply his luggage, stores, and equipment.

When Weston had first given notice to his decision of spending his leave up in the backwoods he had been met with frank and incredulous grins, and any number of "I don't think!" on the part of his friends and colleagues; but when he persisted, the incredulity gave way to an uneasy feeling of wonder and dismay, and there were even those who questioned the normal state of his mentality. For if he carried out this absurd scheme of his, he would break one of the cherished traditions of the Police!

It had become an established and honored rule that those members of the Police who hailed from the Old Country should proceed there when their three months' leave came around, and it had become almost a point of honor for each member to try, at least, to "make the grade."

"But, look, Wess—why the devil do you want to bury yourself in the wood?" Inspector Trench—the officer commanding the Portage Bend Detachment—had inquired of the sergeant as soon as he heard of his decision. "I should think, you had a skinful of the North by this time. You seem to have been chasing around up there constantly for the last three or four years."

"That's just it, sir," answered the sergeant with a grin. "I have been chasing around so much that I want to have a quiet time up there for a spell to see what the country is really like. Long ago I picked out an island on Clear Water Lake; I intend to build a shack there; and then spend my time fishing, shooting, reading, loafing and smoking—principally the last two. And if I should happen to see Corporal Wilson or any of the others boys pass my rural retreat with tongue hanging out, playing hide-and-seek with some bohunk all over the lot—well, sir, my happiness would be just about complete." And the sergeant's grin broadened.

"Well, Sergeant, I can see your point to a certain extent," said the inspector reflectively. "But even so, England is England, you know; and think of the good times one can have over there. And, anyhow, it is a change of scenery."

"That is about all it is, sir, a change of scenery, with honors in favor of the scenery left behind."

"But your relatives? I understand you have quite a crowd over there. Surely you must have had some good times with some of them?"

"Don't talk about relatives, sir. They insisted on receiving me in that gentle, pitying, spirit accorded the lost sheep or the returned prodigal. They never could forgive me for joining the Police. They don't seem to fancy having a kind of 'Bobby' in the fold. No, the relatives were somewhat of a washout."

THE inspector laughed.

"You are a queer customer, Sergeant," remarked the inspector. "But I suppose you know your own business best." And there the matter was allowed to rest.

Sergeant Richard Weston was between twenty-nine and thirty years of age. He was six feet tall and tipped the scales at a hundred and eighty pounds, but he was so symmetrically built that he did not actually look his weight and height. He was straight as a ram-rod and looked every inch a soldier. His decidedly good-looking, clean-shaven face, from which a pair of brown eyes looked serenely out in the world, generally wore an expression of quiet boredom; and this had led to some unpleasantness to other people in the past. It had happened on occasions that some of the care-free, had summed up Weston from his mild and serene appearance as a harmless "dude," and had, on the strength of that summation, ventured to carry their pleasantries toward him past the point which is considered seemly. And the results had been as distressing as they had been unexpected. For Weston, deservedly, had the reputation of being the best boxer and scrapper in the Police, and was generally labelled a "tough nut."

His father had been a distinguished army officer. Both he and his wife had died during an epidemic while serving in India before young Richard had reached his tenth year. But they had left their children—Richard and an elder sister extremely well off. Young Richard had in due course been sent to Harrow; and when he left school his relatives had considered it a matter of course that he enter Sandhurst and follow in his father's footsteps. But then young Richard had dropped a bomb in their midst by declaring that he intended to go out to Canada and join the Royal North-West Mounted Police!

This bald announcement had first stunned his relatives into horrified silence; but for a moment only. And soon the storm burst! They all fell on him at once, and exclamations, of which fragments such as "Disgracing the family," "A common trooper," "A ranker," etc., were the outstanding features, buzzed into his ears in an endless stream. But through it all young Richard kept his head well; looked extremely bored; and declared stoutly—every time his relatives were forced to interrupt their efforts through lack of breath—that he was going, no matter what they might say.

At last the family, in council assembled, and after much wrangling, decided to let him have his way; for, it was unanimously agreed, before a year had passed he would be certain to have come to his senses; and then they would gather him into the fold—in this case Sandhurst—and in due course launch him into the world, a Christian and a gentleman.

But Richard had refused to live up to their anticipations, and a certain coldness on the part of the relatives was the unavoidable result. This coldness was not the actual deciding moment in his determination to take to the backwoods—it was principally his love for the big open spaces and the free trail which had decided him—but it had carried a certain weight in the tipping of the scales.

The sergeant was now sitting on his bed in the barrack-room of the Portage Bend Detachment. He was puffing contentedly away at his pipe as he was thoughtfully contemplating Corporal Wilson and Constables Connor and Bryan, who were busily packing the last bundles of his outfit on the floor in front of him.

"Look here," he remarked presently, "it seems to me that your efforts lack to a certain extent the necessary snap and ginger. I'm sure you'll not consider it unkind if I gently point out to you that my leave is limited to only three months."

"Oh, shut up!" came from the toilers on the floor.

Corporal Wilson, however, considered that the occasion called for a few supplementary remarks.

"It's all right for you to talk, Wess! All you do is to keep your seat warm while we do the dirty work for you."

"May I be allowed to remark," observed Weston mildly, "that while I was quietly and efficiently packing my gear, you fellows

would insist on butting in and getting in the way, so that at last—in sheer self-defence, I was forced to retire from active participation in the operations and confine myself to general supervision."

"Gee wizz! What a sentence! It's a wonder you don't break that jaw of yours, Sergeant," exclaimed Constable Bryan, a young Canadian, lifting his face, red from exertion, from the bundle he was packing. "And where do you get that quiet and efficient stuff from, anyhow? You raised such an all-fired racket, that we simply had to take over your duties to make sure that you got started sometime. We ain't going to take any chances of you being delayed and hanging around here. Not if we can help it!"

"The discipline around this Detachment is very bad," sighed the sergeant. "I shudder to think of what it will be like after you fellows have been without my restraining influence for three months. I suppose it will become my painful duty to introduce physical and rifle drill every morning at five sharp. Nothing like physical jerks in the snappy, early hours for propping up the crumbling edifice of discipline. But we'll see."

BUT now Corporal Wilson—who had at last finished his bundle—spoke up:

"Say, Wess, you' been jawing continuously for an hour or so. I never heard a worse fellow for gassing and talking tripe! You're just like an alarm clock I had once, that had all the gadgets for stopping the ringing broken. It kept going till the juice gave out. You're as bad as that, and it's got to stop! Let's gag him, boys!" and with a whoop he made a dash for the sergeant, followed by the constables.

In spite of his manful struggles against heavy odds the sergeant was soon lying full length on his bed, with his fellow officers perching on various parts of his anatomy; a pillow covering his face.

"Will you behave, Wess?" inquired the corporal, as spokesman for the champions for peace and harmony.

"Poofsh, poofsh," came muffled from under the pillow.

"Ease up a bit on the soft pedal, Corporal, so we can hear what the gentleman has got to say," advised Bryan.

Wilson lifted a corner of the pillow.

"Is it war or peace, Wess?"

"Peace, boys, peace—and breakfast! I'm

so empty that I felt Bryan go straight through me when he sat down on my stomach just now. Let me up. Here's Angus with the rest of the bearer-party," pleaded the sergeant, as three half-breeds entered the room.

The limbs of the law sorted themselves out, and got up from the bed.

"Here you are, Angus," said the sergeant, indicating the bundles on the floor. "That is the rest of the lot."

"Lot is right," commented Connor in a *sotto voce* aside to Corporal Wilson. "I bet you Columbus would have felt slightly embarrassed if old Isabella had tried to make him ship half of the sergeant's truck when he was setting out to discover New York and district."

Angus and his assistants, in the meantime, quickly fastened their "portage-straps" to the bundles, adjusted the straps on their heads, and departed towards the river and the waiting canoes.

"I'll be down right away!" shouted the sergeant after him. "I'm only going to hustle some grub. What's the time somebody?"

"Six-twenty," answered Bryan.

"Good! Then I'll be able to start before seven. Get into your tunics, and let's get over to the 'Chink's' for breakfast."

The corporal and the constables had been working in their shirt-sleeves during their packing operations. The sergeant himself was dressed in mufti; an old jacket; a pair of baggy, but comfortable trousers; moccasins on his feet; and on his head a felt hat, which looked as if it had seen the years roll by and had been saddened by the sight.

The two constables climbed into their tunics, but the corporal hesitated.

"Say, Wess," he addressed the sergeant apologetically. "Before you leave, there's one or two things in the office I want you to explain to me."

"Good Lord," growled Weston. "Didn't I carefully go through every voucher and report with you yesterday? What the devil's biting you? I want to get off!"

"There are a few things I haven't quite got the stranglehold on. It'll only take a few minutes, Wess," pleaded Wilson. "Connor and Bryan can go on ahead and order our breakfasts."

"OK. Order a double helping of bacon and eggs for me, and a lot of coffee," the sergeant directed the two constables—now resplendent in Stetson hat; scarlet tunic;

dark blue riding breeches with yellow stripes; and bespurred, shiny Strathcona boots. "Come on, Wils, and make it snappy. What the dickens you fellows will do around here, without me to drynurse you, the Lord only knows," he grumbled as he followed the corporal into the office.

But Corporal Wilson's few minutes seemed each to expand indefinitely past its normal scope of sixty seconds. Each minute did not exactly run into hours; but pretty nearly so—or so, at least, it appeared to the sergeant. Wilson—normally the bright lad—seemed particularly dull and lacking in perception on this morning. Documents which he—the sergeant—had explained fully and comprehensively to the corporal on the preceding day, and which he had considered finished and forgotten—as far as he was concerned—were now dug up by the corporal. The more impatient the sergeant grew the duller the corporal seemed to become. At last the sergeant exclaimed in exasperation:

"For the love of Mike, Wils! Which was the last lunatic asylum you attended? I only ask because there must have been gross negligence on somebody's part—letting you loose, I mean."

"Don't go in off the deep end, Wess. I don't seem to be able to get the half-Nelson on these things this morning. I don't know what is the matter with me," said Wilson apologetically.

"Got a hang-over, I suppose," was Weston's somewhat direct and brutal comment.

But the sergeant was utterly wrong in his diagnosis, Corporal Wilson's head was quite clear, and the dullness he affected was only an adroit move in a little game he was playing. Certain arrangements of the corporal's might be upset if the sergeant appeared near the river before seven o'clock. So the wily Wilson had staged the whole scene with the sole object of sparring for time.

When the hands of the clock had at last crawled around to ten minutes before seven, the corporal let his now almost fuming victim off. They thereupon proceeded to the Chink restaurant—where they ate most of their meals—quickly wrapped themselves outside a substantial breakfast; and at 7.05 the sergeant, escorted by the corporal and the two constables, laid a course for the river.

As the party arrived at the rim of the plateau, and could see the river bank, at

the bottom of the slope, the sergeant stopped dead.

"What's up? Has there been an accident or something?" he inquired anxiously. For the bank near the waiting canoes was thronged with what, according to local estimates, must be described as a vast concourse of persons of both sexes. As the sergeant watched the crowd there was a sudden flash of brightly burnished metal, and the Portage Bend Voluntary Band struck up: "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

The sergeant was an adept at adding two and two together, and with unerring instinct he placed the responsibility for the demonstration in the right quarter.

"I owe you one for this, Wils. I can see now that there was method in your madness this morning. I suppose the balloon was scheduled to go up at seven a.m.," he said, eyeing Wilson vindictively. "And I suppose you two are in it too," he continued to the two constables, who were frankly grinning. "Don't waste any breath on futile denials, gentlemen. The jury has found you guilty without leaving the box." He again turned his attention to the assembly on the bank.

"You seem to have made a pretty thorough sweep of the town. Nobody seems to be missing. By hec! There is the inspector, too; and his misses. So even he's been persuaded to stray from the narrow path. Well, I'll get even with the lot of you yet. I have got three whole months in which to scheme out a fitting punishment for this. Anyhow, let us advance—or rather descend. Nobody shall ever be able to say that a Weston faltered in the face of heavy odds."

By the time the sergeant and escort had scrambled down the slope, the band had blown itself out. "Big" MacKay, a lumberman friend of the sergeant, dressed in his best suit and resplendent with collar and tie, detached himself from the crowd and came solemnly forward, a roll of paper in his hand. He stopped some paces in front of the apprehensive sergeant, unrolled the paper, and commenced reading an address in a loud voice.

THE address we will not give in full. It is sufficient to say that its subject matter was principally a comparison between Weston and other explorers who had carried the torch of civilization into dark and dim corners of the earth in the past.

The address paid handsome tributes to the sergeant, but, nevertheless, Weston was not happy! As a matter of fact, he had made one determined effort to quash the proceedings right at the start; but had been badly routed. MacKay had neatly voiced the sentiments of those present when he gently but firmly pointed out to the sergeant that "you are going to take in the whole of these here ce-le-brations as per pro-gramme, Wess, if we have to hawg-tie you; so you may as well take it peaceful like." And Weston took it peacefully—at least, outwardly.

The address at last having been brought to a happy conclusion, there followed speeches and more music, delivered with a maximum of good-will and sound, and a minimum of harmony.

It was past eight o'clock before the sergeant was allowed to take his departure. Followed by the strains of "Auld Lang Syne" and the cheers of those left behind—including some twenty children and eight dogs, who lined the rim of the plateau above—the canoes of the adventurers glided out on the great Saskatchewan. That a horse-shoe—which was thrown after them for good luck—missed the sergeant's head by a fraction of an inch and fell into the river, was considered somewhat of a bad omen; but apart from that the expedition started under the happiest auspices.

The sergeant's flotilla consisted of two twenty-four-foot and one eighteen-foot Peterborough canoes, and for crew he had four half-breeds. Weston and Angus worked one twenty-four-footer and two half-breeds the other. The eighteen-footer was handled by one breed only, as it carried a considerably lighter load than the other canoes. As a matter of fact, the bulk of its cargo consisted of a small cooking range, dismantled and crated—which the sergeant had hopes of being able to reassemble; a case marked "With Care. Glass," and which contained window-panes for the projected cabin; and one other case also marked "With Care. Glass," which, however, did not contain window-panes.

Of three members of the sergeant's crew nothing needs be said, as they were merely birds of passage. The arrangement was, that the three return to Portage Bend as soon as they had assisted Weston and Angus in completing their camp. But Angus must be properly introduced.

His full name was Angus Mackenzie; but

in spite of the vision conjured up by that name of a tall, straight, red-headed Highlander, one has to confess that Angus was small, inclined to be bow-legged, and looked about ninety-nine and a half per cent Indian with his black hair and swarthy features. Nor could he perform on the bagpipes. But in spite of all, Angus was very proud of his Scotch parentage, and consistently refused being taken for an Indian.

But though small of stature, Angus was decidedly tough and wiry; and in addition he was blessed with a keen intelligence.

The first meeting between Weston and Angus had been somewhat dramatic. Shortly after his first arrival in the Bend, the former had discovered Angus lying on the ground in the process of being kicked to death by a number eleven lumberman's hobnailed boot, which encased the foot of a big, ugly, furious, half-drunk Russian, who had taken offense to Angus for some reason or other. As Weston objected strongly to that particular form of punishment, he had immediately gone into action, and in a swift round—lasting about one second—he had knocked the Russian out for the count. Since then Angus had attached himself to Weston, and he had rendered the policeman valuable assistance in many past adventures. On the other hand, Weston had learnt to appreciate Angus's many good qualities; his honesty; his unswerving loyalty; his fearlessness; his quick wit; and by now, the intercourse between the two had developed into a kind of Mutual Admiration Society; and Weston invariably brought Angus along as guide, philosopher, and friend when he took to the trail.

For two days Weston's expedition pushed up-stream on the Saskatchewan. On the third day they turned up one of the water sheds leading about due north, and for six more days they pushed farther and farther into the deep woods. They paddled up rivers and across lakes; they paddled, poled, and lined up the smaller rapids; and they struggled with their canoes and equipment along the often formidable and tortuous portages around the bigger rapids.

The sergeant could not have picked on a better stamping-ground than Clear Water Lake and surrounding country. The lake itself was about twenty miles long; studded with tree-covered islands; surrounded by spruce-covered hills and ridges. Into the hills from the lake shot numerous bays—

some long and narrow, some wide and short—and in these bays played and sported the trout, the white-fish, the bass, and other members of the fish family.

In amongst the trees in the woods whizzed the partridges on their way to the clearings, where they tripped around on the ground in big flocks, nibbling the berries off the juniper and wild berry bushes, which grew here in wild abundance.

Only ten miles away were the "Grassy Hills" on whose slopes roamed big herds of jumping-deer; so on Clear Water Lake there was to be found occupation for rod, gun and rifle.

From the southern end of the lake flowed the Gulch River. For some distance the river winds fairly slowly and serenely in and out amongst low hills; but gradually it narrows and gains speed, until at last the waters are hurled—a boiling, foaming mass—into the Gulch Rapids some two miles from the lake end. These rapids—roaring and raging through a gap between two almost perpendicular cliff walls, each some fifty to sixty feet high—can in more or less safety be "shot" by an expert canoe-man, but they are a regular death-trap for the novice or the less experienced.

The portage around these rapids is universally unpopular. Although the whole portage is only about two miles long, it leads across a pretty steep hill; is rocky and lumpy; and the sergeant and party were perspiring and swearing freely as they struggled across with their packs.

"Say, Angus," said Weston to his right-hand man, as the two were resting on the portage. "That river over there is the one leading up to Grassy Hills, isn't it?" and he pointed across to the opposite bank, where another river emptied itself into the here swiftly-flowing Gulch River.

"Aha," affirmed Angus. He was a man of few words, and seldom given to small talk.

"Well, as soon as we are firmly settled one of our first trips will be to Grassy Hills. It happens that I have never been up that way before, and I want to see if there really are as many deer up there as people tell you."

"Plenty deer," grunted Angus, as he and the sergeant struggled to their feet with their packs.

The island on which the sergeant had decided to build his camp was almost in the center of the lake. It was approximately

one mile long and half a mile in width. The south end of the island was low and grassy, with birch-trees and aspen forming a natural park. Towards the northern end this park sloped gently to where the island ended in a spruce-covered hill. On the eastern shore of the low part was a small, sandy cove—shaped like a lagoon—which formed a natural, sheltered harbor for the canoes.

FOR more than a week this island was the center of intense activities. The air rang with the clanking of axes and whinnying of saws. Hefty spruces were cut down and hauled to Weston's camp-side beside the lagoon. The sergeant, as the moving spirit, spurred the usually phlegmatic and indolent breeds on to unusual amounts of energy, and soon the camp commenced to take shape. On the tenth day it stood completed in all its new glory, the pride of Weston's heart.

They had built two shacks. The bigger—their living quarters—could only boast one room; but it was a fairly large, comfortable and bright room, with four windows to let in the daylight. They had constructed two bunks, somewhat crude but comfortable, with willow branches laid cross-wise serving as springs. They had made a table and chairs, and a number of shelves.

On the gable end facing the entrance had been constructed a roomy hearth, for on rainy days the air could be cold and sharp. This hearth had been designed by the sergeant, and had been erected under his constant supervision; and when it was finished he declared, with not a little satisfaction, that it was "a whale of a peach."

The smaller cabin was the stores and cook-shack. In this had been installed the cooking-range, which the sergeant had managed—somewhat to his surprise—to reassemble.

Weston surveyed his domain with honest pride, and he declared to Angus that things could not possibly have been better, a sentiment to which Angus gave his wholehearted agreement by a grunt.

The extra half-breeds were now paid off and packed off to Portage Bend in one of the twenty-four-foot canoes; and Weston and Angus settled down to enjoy life. For the first four days they paddled around on the lake and took strolls into the adjacent woods. They found plenty of fish, but it was still a little early for the partridges.

They shot a few, however, and with fresh fish and fowls to swell their larder they bade a fond adieu to their supply of tinned provisions for the time being.

On the evening of the fourth day the two were sitting outside the cabin, leaning against the wall, while digesting their supper. They were placidly sucking away at their pipes, and each had beside him an enamelled mug containing whisky and water. The sergeant had no scruples about supplying Angus with whisky in reasonable quantities; for in his intercourse with that fluid, and its first cousins, Angus certainly proved a true descendant from the Scotch side of the house.

The sergeant gazed approvingly at the lake and the woods, over which the sun, hanging low over the north-western horizon, shed its slanting rays.

"Isn't it wonderful, Angus?" he said presently. "The peace and quiet of it all! So soothing and restful to be away from the turmoil of the bustling, striving world." He paused for a moment to take a sip from his mug. Angus was stoutly sucking away at his pipe in silence. He was used to these little dissertations of the sergeant's. He never made any comments, principally because he knew that no comments were expected, secondly because he generally did not understand what the sergeant was talking about. "What say you to a trip to Grassy Hills to-morrow?" asked Weston.

"Sure! Damn fine!"

"Ok. As soon as we have finished our smoke we'll start on our preparations for the trip."

The program was duly carried out, and early on the following morning they set out. They used the bigger of the two canoes they had left, for the trip. They brought with them supplies for four days; besides tent, rifles and shotguns.

The swift current in the Gulch River just above the rapids makes the mouth of Grassy Hill River rather difficult to approach; and the hard paddle-work involved caused the sergeant to voice a few loud and adverse comments on the wisdom of Providence in having arranged the relative positions of the two rivers as it had. These comments failed, however, to evoke any sympathy in Angus. He knew that Weston's comments were pure, unadulterated bluff. For there was nothing that the sergeant liked better than to negotiate a tricky bit of river; and shooting rapids was his dearest hobby.

Four days later the hunters again approached the junction of the two rivers on their return trip. The expedition had been eminently successful, as the carcass of a deer and several partridges were added to the cargo of the canoe.

At the moment when their hands instinctively took a firmer grip around their paddles in anticipation of the impending struggle with the turbulent waters of Gulch River, their eyes beheld a most startling vision. From behind a bend farther up Gulch River shot a canoe, heading straight for the rapids; and in the canoe sat a girl dressed in white, with a jaunty, white panama hat on her head!

CHAPTER II

NEW YORK was enjoying one of those bright days in the early summer when it was neither too hot nor too cold. Even the most pessimistic-minded had to admit that the temperature was just right!

Even the policeman who was strolling along the shady side of Lower Broadway—casting proprietary glances along the street from under his cap-peak—seemed to have fallen under the spell of the weather.

Through the people who thronged the side-walk on the shady side of the street, a gentleman pushed his way with a determined air, his jaws champing rhythmically on his chewing-gum. He was of medium size, dressed in a check suit, with a cloth cap drawn well down over his eyes. There was nothing particularly obtrusive about his appearance, and a casual observer would have passed him by without a second glance. There was, however, a certain cast about his clean-shaven features with the quick, furtive eyes, which would have made a keen and experienced student of the New York specimens of mankind pause and consider. And if the above student had been a master of his subject he would unerringly have classified the passer-by as a member of society who would consider an automatic pistol in a holster under his armpit, and a blackjack in his pocket, indispensable and integral parts of a gentleman's wardrobe.

And the student would have guessed correctly. For Slippery Jim was a crook, and a hard-working crook at that. For years he had hardly had any holidays, except on the few occasions when he, reluctantly, had

been obliged to accept the hospitality dispensed by the public at Sing-Sing and similar places of entertainment.

As Slippery pushed his way along the side-walk he suddenly bumped into a man who had just come out of a cigar store.

"Say, why don't you keep them lamps of yours skinned so that you . . ." he commenced aggressively, but that was as far as he got. For, getting a clear view of the other man's face, his own lit up in pleased recognition. "Gosh, if it ain't Joe!" he exclaimed joyfully. "Put it there, Joe! I guess I ain't glad to have you within range of my optics! Just ask me! I ain't saw you since God knows when. Where you been, Joe?"

The other man—taller and heavier than Slippery, seemed equally pleased. But at the latter's query about his past whereabouts a cloud flitted over his sunny features.

"Had a piece of tough luck. Been up the river for some months," he explained, jerking his head in the direction in which he presumed Sing-Sing to be situated. "Met a festive-looking gent who looked as if he might sport a sizeable wad—down a dark street one night and busted him one over the head. And like a mug, I hadn't noticed that an interfering cop was rubbering from around a corner. Cost me six months," he ended gloomily.

"Tough luck!" commented Slippery with a sympathetic click of his tongue.

"What you been doing lately, Slippery?" inquired Joe, obviously desirous of changing the subject.

"Nothing much. What with the cops getting snooper an' snooper every day, and one thing an' another; there ain't hardly no chance for a go-getter with initiative to get nowhere these days," said Slippery with simple pathos.

"You said it! Times ain't what they used to be. It's getting so that a fellar can't hardly call his soul his own. And they call this a free country!" observed Joe bitterly, his voice husky with emotion.

And the two friends shook their heads sorrowfully.

Having passed this, their last silent tribute to the freedom and liberty of the U.S.A., they once more turned their attention to everyday matters.

"Say! I've got a date with a guy," explained Joe briskly, once more the man of affairs. "I gotta get a move on. Which way are you goin', Slippery?"

"I was hoofing it for the Gorgonzola Building when I met you. I have to go down an' see old Schinkelstein. He wrote an' told me he had some biss for me!"

"Say! Doesn't that beat the band? Just ask me! Let me tell you somethin', Slippery! Old Schinky is the guy I've got a date with. Say!" Joe exclaimed, slightly excited, "I wonder if Schinky has a job doped out for you an' me to work together on! Wouldn't that be swell? Say, do you remember them days when you an' me worked them shacks up in the Adirondacks? Some swell job that! Easy pickings that was."

"It sure would be fine to work together; but I hope that Schinky ain't springin' a job out amongst the hay-seeds on us," said Slippery. "I don't know that I have any great hankering after leavin' li'l ol' New York just now. The base-ball seasons well under way, with the Giants leading, and it'd be fierce missing the ball-games for sittin' out among the rubes. Taking another think, though," he added reflectively, "I ain't so sure that it wouldn't be wise for me to retire incog. for some time, an' give the cops a chance of getting into the habit of forgetting me. They been some curious about me lately. Anyhow, let's breeze along and hear what line of dope Schinky is going to hand out."

Mr. Schinkelstein was a gentleman in the early fifties of pronounced European extraction. The brass plate on the entrance to his office proclaimed him a "Broker"; but one can form some idea as to the extent of his brokerage business when one is informed that Mr. Schinkelstein's suit of offices was limited to one room only, and that the sum total of his staff was one man—Mr. Schinkelstein himself! But the modest surroundings must not lead one to the impression that the concern was of no importance. As a matter of fact, Mr. Schinkelstein's business was extremely flourishing, and he had a large and varied clientele.

WHEN Messrs. Joe and Slippery entered his office, Mr. Schinkelstein beamed on them through his glasses with obvious pleasure.

"Vell, vell! How are you, boys? I heard you have chust been resting, Joe. Tough luck! Sit down, sit down and have a cigar. I've got a chob for you two boys."

"Howdy, Schinky!" greeted Joe and Slippery.

"Now give us the spiel, Schinky," suggested Joe when they were seated, each puffing away at a two-for-a-quarter cigar.

"Yes, yes, boys. Ve vill have a nice little chat. Chust lock the door, one of you. Vat I have to say is strictly private."

"It would be, or else there wouldn't be no job for us," muttered Slippery, getting up. He walked across to the door, turned the key in the lock, and returned to his seat.

"Vell, now ve can talk," commenced Mr. Schinkelstein. "Have you boys heard of Hiram J. Morgan, the millionaire fruit importer?"

Joe merely nodded; but Slippery poured forth a few rather excited remarks:

"Do I know of Hiram J. Morgan? Wake me up in the night an' ask me another! I nearly got hooked once doing a little job around his joint on Riverside Drive. Say! Lemme tell you something, Schinky! If you want a job done around his homestead, then rule out this baby. That ain't a Christian house at all; but a no good trap, with burglar-alarms and things all over the place!"

"Don't excite yourself, friend Chim. I don't vant you to burgle his house. I chust vant you to kidnap his daughter," explained Schinkelstein simply.

There was silence for a few minutes in the office. Not because the occupants had been particularly startled by this bald announcement. But simply because Schinkelstein had found it expedient to perform some small dental operations with the air of a gold tooth-pick, which he had extricated from his vest-pocket; and Joe waited patiently for him to continue. The only one who felt any qualms at the kidnapping-prospect was Slippery. Not because the mere matter of kidnapping was disagreeable to him. The reason for his scruples stuck deeper than that. Once, in a not distant past, he had committed the tactical blunder of letting a girl coax him to take her to Coney Island; only to find out the painful truth afterwards that her "steady" was a prize-fighter. Since then Slippery had tried to evade any jobs which involved women. He took advantage of the temporary silence in the office to voice his scruples.

"Say, Schinky, I can't say I feel like blowin' a clash of triumph on the trumpets over this job of yours. I didn't see the job yet that didn't get busted up as soon as a bit of skirt got mixed up in it!" He spoke with considerable bitterness. The line of

action adopted by the prize-fighter was still a green memory which rankled in Slippery's mind. "So I think you had better rule me out of this job."

"Wait a minute, Slippery, till I have given you the whole dope," spoke up Schinkelstein, a shade of impatience in his voice. "There von't be any bust-up on this chob! Have you ever seen me hand you out bum dope?" Like all good generals Schinkelstein used to pass lightly over past reverses. As his audience kept a discreet silence he continued: "Vell, here is the proposition. Hiram J. is going up to Canada with his wife an' daughter on a fishing-trip. They are going by rail to a place called Portage Bend; and from there they are going by canoes into the woods to a likely place to camp. Now you boys vill go up to Portage Bend ahead of them; and when you get there you vill find out where they are going to camp. Then you vill camp in some hidden place in the district where Hiram J. is camping, and when you get an opportunity you'll pinch his daughter."

"An' what then?" grunted Joe.

"Wait, wait!" admonished Schinkelstein. "I ain't finished yet. When you have got the girl, you vill send him a letter which I'll give you; and in the letter is explained vat he is to do to recover his daughter. He must also sign some documents, which are also in the letter; and then he must send the documents to a place I have arranged for. As soon as I get the documents, I'll send you word; and you can let the girl go back to her pa, do you see."

"And what are them papers?" asked Joe.

"Is it necessary for you to know?"

"You are damn tooting it is! You don't think we'll go into this job blindfolded, do you? Well, then you've got another guess coming. I for one ain't going to find myself in the soup up to my neck without knowing how I got there, if anything goes wrong. So you better spiel it all out, so we know what we're doing!"

"All right, all right. Nothing to get mad about, Joe. I'll put you wise to the whole scheme. It's like this. Hiram J. is forming a big syndicate to collar the whole of the fruit import. Now there is already a smaller syndicate, do you see, the Gulf Fruit Import Company; and this bigger syndicate will smash the smaller one when it starts operating. Now, his daughter is the apple of his eye, and if ve get hold of her, he'll do anything to get her back. So you see,

ve pinch the daughter; father signs the documents ve send him; he gets back daughter; ve get the documents which mean the dissolution of the new syndicate if they are used the right way; the new syndicate gets dissolved; the Gulf Fruit Import Company is safe; and all is happy! Now, boys, I ask you. Ain't that an attractive proposition? No risks or nothing, a very fine holiday up in the woods, and no cops to interfere."

"I ain't so sure about that," said Joe doubtfully. "Ain't they got some kind of cops up there?"

"Ah, you mean the Mounted Police. I heard about it. But they won't be no trouble to you boys. You boys'll know how to handle the kind of country rubes they have got for police up there. Now vat about it?"

"Well, it sounds the goods," hesitatingly said Joe, who seemed to have constituted himself as spokesman. "But personally I ain't shouting for joy at the prospect of hangin' around in the backwoods, miles and miles away from saloons an' movies. We may hand you the helping mitt, though, if there is enough dough in it for us."

A CERTAIN tenseness manifested itself in the three faces. They had now arrived at the important part of the deal.

"Vell, there is five hundred dollars for each of you boys in this deal, an' all your expenses. All your expenses, mind, an' five hundred each," said Schinkelstein impressively.

Joe gave a short, contemptuous laugh, which was faithfully echoed by Slippery.

"What do you think you are handing us? Pocket-money for cigars?" inquired Joe sarcastically. "Five hundred dollars for sitting out in the woods for months, and dry-nursing a skirt at that! Not if I'm conscious! Come again, Schinky. Say a thousand each, and our expenses; and we'll talk."

"But, my dear boys!" cried Schinkelstein, tears in his voice. "Vatfor can you be reasonable not?" He always tangled his English somewhat when he got excited. "Verfrom do I get anything out of the deal, ven you vant the whole lot? My dear boys! Be reasonable, yes? Five hundred dollars is a lot of money for a chob that is a cinch like this, and expenses!"

"Oh, dry up, Schinky!" was Joe's unfeeling comment. "I reckon you've got more 'an five thousand cart-wheels to handle this deal. A thousand each and expenses is what

we want, or we won't sit in. That's flat! Ain't that so, Slippery?"

"You said it!" agreed Slippery.

Schinkelstein continued to plead with the two for a while. He wrung his hands, his voice was husky and quavered with emotion, and tears stood in his eyes; but even these visible signs of his distress failed to soften the two hardened individuals who were sitting opposite him. They remained adamant; and in the end Schinkelstein had to give in.

"Vell, boys, I'll give you the thousand; but it is ruin for me," he said at last in a voice which was still unsteady. "You will come to me to-morrow, and I'll give you money for your expenses and all instructions. I shall also pay you each five hundred down, and pay you the rest when you are through with the chob. That all right? You know you can trust me!"

"No we don't! But I hope you have got enough brains so as not to double-cross us," remarked Joe grimly.

Schinkelstein tactfully passed over the implied slur on his integrity.

"Vell, boys. That's all settled, then. But there is one more thing. Miss Morgan must be treated all the time as a lady. No rough stuff, you understand!"

"Say! If you have got any dealings with a Jane, it's not her but you who is liable to get the rough end of the stick," spoke up Slippery oracularly. "What kind of a looker is this dame, anyhow?"

"I understand she is some peach. She has often been described as one of the fairest of the belles of New York," answered Schinkelstein.

"I knew it!" sighed Slippery, shaking his head; and the gloom which spread over his features showed that his worst suspicions had been confirmed. "The prettier they are the more trouble they are. Gosh, I don't like this business, and you can tell 'em I said so! But, of course, a thousand smackers is a thousand smackers!" he ended thoughtfully.

"Aw, Slippery! What's eating you?" inquired Joe. "I've seen you handle some tough propositions in my time; and now you go along and get the willies over a bit of a skirt!"

"I have my reasons!" answered Slippery darkly.

"Vell, boys," spoke up Schinkelstein, who was once more his genial self, "I won't keep you any longer. Come back to-mor-

row at ten in the morning, and we'll fix things up. That's all right, now? Yes?"

Joe and Slippery nodded their agreement and rose to depart. Schinkelstein saw his visitors to the door, and shook hands with each in turn. When the door had closed behind the two departing gentlemen he returned to his desk, rubbing his hands, while his face irradiated joy and pleasure.

For Schinkelstein had been paid ten thousand dollars to engineer the deal!

CHAPTER III

MESSRS. SLIPPERY AND JOE duly arrived in Portage Bend. There were two hotels at the place: the Palace and the Sprucelodge. The latter being the less pretentious and select of the two, it was adopted as their temporary abode by the two gentlemen. There they would only be members of a crowd and less likely to catch the public eye. Almost immediately after their arrival they received a rude shock. On asking to be directed to the nearest saloon, they had been informed, to their utter disgust and horror, that no such accommodation existed in the town; and their disgust rose to dismay when they were further informed that the place was "dry!"

"I could a-told you," groaned Slippery. "This baby knew all along that this skirt-business wasn't going to be no joy-parade with bands playin' an' bells ringin'!"

"You can can all that sob-stuff right here and now!" rejoined Joe angrily. His partner's constant pessimism had commenced to jar his nerves. "Listen here! It stands to reason that there must be some stuff around somewheres. No man could hang around a bum burg like this an' survive if there wasn't some of the best handy somewhere. I'm going out to scout around for a bit. If I can't locate some real stuff, you can tell the world that I'm dead from the neck up!"

And Joe quickly proved that his estimation of local conditions had not merely been an optimistic dream. In under an hour he was back at their hotel. He collected Slippery and led the way to their room, carefully locked the door, and triumphantly produced a bottle of whisky.

"Say, you're some marvel, Joe!" exclaimed Slippery, his face beaming. "Where'd you get the stuff?"

"Where'd I get it?" repeated Joe loftily. "Say, lemme tell you, Slippery, that this burg is as full of boot-leggers as a mission-meeting is of white neck-ties—and then some! Of course it costs like hell, but that is Schinky's funeral. He'll have to stand the racket!"

"This is sure fine," remarked Slippery, after a while. "All the same," he continued reflectively, "it ain't quite the same sitting behind a locked door with your booze, feeling like a sneak. I like to take my drinks free and easy with one foot on the brass rail and an elbow on the mahogany. Gosh, for I'll ol' New York!" he ended with a half sigh.

"Aw, change your record, Slippery," pleaded Joe. "It ain't as if we was up here for the rest of our natural. As soon as Hiram J. and party arrive we'll have some quick action; and as soon as the job's done we'll streak for home like greased lightning!"

"You said it! And it can't be too soon for yours truly," observed Slippery. "Damn all skirts!" he added under his breath as he emptied his glass.

The days following were not spent in idleness by the gallant couple. They immediately set about to find two guides who must have certain qualifications. Firstly they must know the country well, and secondly they must not suffer from the defect that scruples form part of their moral make-up. Before many days they had singled out two half-breeds who seemed to answer to the specifications. Their own experience and intuition convinced them that the two filled the second condition, and careful inquiries soon convinced them that they had all the qualifications stipulated for in the first condition. The two half-breeds were consequently approached, and a bargain was soon struck.

Joe and Slippery, of course, did not reveal to their chosen retainers the true object of the expedition. They merely hinted that some "deep stuff" was on the cards, and that it was necessary to keep strictly "mum." The breeds nodded knowingly. They had both been employed by claim-jumpers in their days, and, not unnaturally, they jumped to the conclusion that the projected expedition was for some kindred purpose.

Joe and Slippery left nearly all the preparations for their trip to their new allies; but the special accommodations and provi-

sions needed for entertaining a lady at their camp they secured themselves. This delicate affair they could not possibly leave to the breeds. Several days before Hiram J. and party were due to arrive all their preparations had been completed; and the two principals had even discarded the dress of civilization to don the free and easy garments of the Great Out-doors.

They were both at the railway depot when Hiram J. Morgan, heading a procession consisting of wife, daughter, and ladies' maid, stepped off the train. Slippery eagerly scrutinized Miss Morgan; and his heart sank. Up to that moment he had vaguely hoped that Schinkelstein's description of the lady had been an exaggeration; but he now found his last hope rudely shattered.

"Gosh! She sure is some peacherino all right enough!" he mumbled unhappily. "I can see this trip is goin' to be tough!"

Miss Morgan was undoubtedly beautiful, and she had the kind of figure which inspires a ladies' tailor to his loftiest efforts, and makes him hum gaily to himself while plying his trade.

Corporal Wilson, who was standing on the platform near the agent's office, swore later that he distinctly felt his heart miss a beat when he found her quiet, grey eyes, with the long lashes, fixed on him for a few moments, while she was curiously regarding his uniform.

Hiram J., a slightly pompous, medium-sized, clean-shaven gentleman, with greying hair and a pair of keen eyes, at once button-holed the agent; and wanted to know:

1. If there were any taxis. 2. If there were any cabs. 3. If there were conveyances of any kind. And 4. If there was anybody at the depot from the hotel to receive them. As all his queries, with the exception of number four, were negatived, the party set off on foot towards the Palace; and the handy man from the hotel, who had formed a reception committee of one, was left to collect their luggage. And, as the handy man expressed it, it took some collecting!

When the last bundle had been added to the ever-growing pile, consternation was written all over his usually placid countenance; and even the train agent eyed the young mountain of luggage with some concern.

"Some outfit!" he remarked to Corporal Wilson. "I heard from Jack up at the hotel, that they were expecting some folks from the States for a fishing and shooting trip;

but this looks more as if they were going out homesteading. Do you know anything about them, Corporal?"

"Nary a thing, except that the young lady was easy to look upon. Judging from their goods and baggage, though, I should say they are intending to go exploring up to the North Pole and back again."

In the meantime the owners of the luggage had reached the Palace. Hiram J. strode up to the desk and accosted the clerk, who, incidentally, also held the positions of assistant manager, book-keeper, and hall-porter.

"I am Mr. Morgan from New York. I think you have some rooms reserved for me and party."

"Sure. One double an' two singles. The best we've got. Sign, please," answered the clerk laconically, pushing the hotel register towards Hiram J.

"I also stipulated for a private sitting-room in my letter to you," remarked the latter somewhat sternly.

"You sure did," agreed the clerk. "But this being the Palace and not the Waldorf-Astoria, private sitting-rooms are an unknown quantity around this hotel, so there is nothin' doin'." Quite missing the limping logic of his argument the clerk turned away to speak to a drummer who had just arrived.

HIRAM J. eyed him fixedly and severely for several moments. There seemed to him to have been lacking the right touch of humility, due to Hiram J. Morgan, millionaire fruit importer; and he resented it! His daughter, who rightly judged from the expression on his face that a storm was impending, quickly stepped up to him and touched his arm.

"Don't pay any attention to that rude person, father," she said in an under-tone. "You must remember, we are out in the wilds now; and we can't expect to meet with any culture and refinement amongst these people."

Hiram J. turned around, a smile dispelling the clouds on his face.

"You are right, daughter!" he said, patting her hand. "I keep forgetting." He was used to following his daughter's lead in matters outside of business.

The party accepted their rooms without enthusiasm, but without adverse comments, as they had all decided to enter into the spirit of "roughing it." As a matter of fact,

the rooms were clean and fairly comfortable; though not erring on the side of luxury. They further found that the meals provided by the hotel were good and wholesome, though simple.

Before the afternoon was over Hiram J., who was a shrewd observer and far from a fool, had realized that what he had at first considered to be studied insolence and impertinence on the part of those natives with whom he had come in contact, was merely the attitude of the free-born who called no man master. He realized that to the people of the North it did not matter one tittle what was a man's social position or the size of his bank-balance. What counted with them was what a man proved himself to be. And he decided to govern his further actions accordingly.

At nine o'clock the following morning Hiram J. proceeded to the Police Barracks, to interview the officer in charge.

Mr. Morgan had first conceived the idea for the trip though listening to the enthusiastic descriptions of the country by a friend of his, who had spent the preceding summer north of Portage Bend. This friend, a Mr. Robb, had described the deep, silent forests, the glittering lakes and rivers, and the fishing and the hunting. And what he had heard had aroused in Mr. Morgan a keen desire to see these places for himself. He had broached the subject to his wife and daughter, and as they had declared themselves not unwilling to accompany him, the trip had been definitely settled.

Mr. Robb had informed Mr. Morgan that any advice or information he might require, he would be able to obtain from the Royal North-West Mounted Police; hence this visit to the Barracks.

When Mr. Morgan had entered the front office, the constable on duty politely rose to his feet and greeted him courteously:

"Good morning, sir. What can I do for you?"

Hiram J. beamed on the constable. This was more the style of address to which he was accustomed. He appraised the smart, soldierly youngster confronting him with obvious approval; in spite of a pronounced discoloration of the latter's right eye, which seemed to hint at recent stormy events.

"Good morning to you, sir," he graciously answered the constable's greeting. "Could I see your commanding officer, do you think?"

"On what business, please, sir?"

"Nothing official. I intend to take a trip up the country with my family; and I have been informed that he might be able to give me a few hints."

The constable invited Mr. Morgan to be seated, while he took that gentleman's card in to the inspector.

While waiting, a movement in one of two steel cages at the back of the office—obviously some kind of cells—attracted the notice of Hiram J. He focussed his eyes on the cage, and had a vision of a man, lying on a bunk, who was alternately stretching himself, and rubbing his eyes and head with his hands. Sundry groans, which escaped him during the process, seemed to indicate that he had a certain grudge against the world on this morning. Presently he heaved himself into a sitting posture, propped his head up with his hands, his elbows resting on his knees; and to Hiram J.'s ears floated the potent and illuminating sentence:

"Gosh, my head's splittin'!"

At that moment the constable returned.

"The inspector will see you in a few minutes, sir," he informed Mr. Morgan; and then he turned his attention to the cage and its occupant.

"Hallo, Jim!" he called cheerfully with a grin. "Awake and about already? How are you feeling?"

"Mean as hell! I must have had a peach of a jag on last night."

"You had, and then some!" answered the constable laconically, unlocking the cell-door. "You'd better come into the barrack-room and have a wash and spruce-up. You're scheduled for an interview with the magistrate at twelve; and the privilege will probably cost you five dollars." The constable grinned broadly.

The prisoner got slowly to his feet and walked wearily into the office. He was a tall, strongly-built man; but further observations of the features with which Nature had endowed him was rendered well-nigh impossible by the scars of battle which covered him. His clothes may once have looked respectable, but now they appeared as if they had gone through a threshing-machine.

This disreputable-looking object stretched himself painfully, and again he informed the world in general as to the state of his head. He, however, abruptly stopped his exercises as the constable's right eye happened to come within range of his limited vision.

"Say, Connor, wher'd you get that eye?"

he demanded in the voice of a man who expected to bear bad news.

"You gave it to me, old son," answered Connor cheerfully.

Jim stared at the constable in horrified silence for a few moments.

"Gosh-ding-it-all!" he burst out at last. "Do you mean to say, I was so far gone, that I started layin' into my own pals?"

"Not as bad as that," reassured the constable. "I just happened to step into a swing you had intended for somebody else."

Jim pondered for a moment. Then he asked for further information. He paid no attention to Hiram J., who formed an interested audience—had probably not even noticed him.

"Say, what was it all about, any how, Connor? I remember goin' to that Russian weddin' an' havin' a few. But after that things seem rather muddled."

"As far as I can gather, you first got drunk and then patriotic," enlightened Constable Connor. "You commenced by stating that God's country was too good for dirty foreigners, and that you would clear the country of them. And then you manfully commenced by making a start with those present. By the time an S.O.S. had gone forth, and Corporal Wilson and I appeared on the scene to take part in the merry revels, you were holding the floor against all comers; and holding it well! On our arrival the meeting adjourned in a hurry; but as you were still breathing fire and brimstone, we simply had to bring you along to cool off. That's about all."

"And quite enough too," groaned Jim dismally. "Every time I go to one of them Russian feasts I always seem to manage to make about a hundred kinds of fools of myself. Must be rotten dope they dish out," he mused.

HE SQUINTED down at what yesterday morning had been a good suit of clothes, and what he saw did not help to revive his drooping spirits.

"Say, Connor, hadn't I better sneak home and change my clothes?" he inquired. "I can't appear before the magistrate like this. My face is bad enough, judgin' from the feel of it, but that I can't change," he sighed ruefully.

"Couldn't risk my reputation by having a pal of mine go through the town looking as—well, what you are looking as," grinned the constable. "So I sent Alec around to

your lodgings this morning for a decent outfit. It's all in the barrack-room; so come along."

Jim disappeared, followed by the constable who excused himself to Hiram J. That gentleman, who had been rather amused by the recent proceedings—although the easy camaraderie between officer and prisoner had seemed somewhat out of place, and at variance with his preconceived notions of the workings of the Majesty of the Law—was not left long alone. Almost as soon as Jim and the constable had disappeared, a corporal entered the room, who informed him that the inspector was free to see him.

He was received very heartily by Inspector Trench; and as soon as he had stated his business, and further, that he was a friend of Mr. Robb's, the inspector grew very cordial.

"So you are Robb's friend," he exclaimed. "Robb wrote to me some time ago and informed me that a friend of his was headed this way; but he forgot to mention the name. Have you fixed on any special locality to camp? I suppose you don't intend to roam around like Robb did, seeing you have got your family with you."

"No, I haven't fixed on any place yet. Robb advised me to consult you first."

"Well then, I can point out to you the exact place that would suit you. Clear Water Lake. It is about a seven or eight days' canoe-journey north-west of here; and an exceptionally good locality for fishing and hunting. As a matter of fact, one of my own men, Sergeant Weston, is up there now, spending a three months' leave on the lake."

"Is that so? Then I can, perhaps, engage him as a guide for us. Of course I am willing to pay him well for his services," suggested Hiram J.

"I am afraid that is quite out of the question," smiled the inspector. "Weston prefers to potter around on his lonesome, without any ties. I am even afraid that he will consider it an unkind act on my part to send you up there to invade his domain. But I am certain that he will render you any assistance you may require; that is, unofficially. And he knows the North from A to Z. He seems to have acquired a positive passion for that part of the world. Summer or winter is all the same to him. He even decided to spend his leave up there in preference to going to England."

"That is just the kind of fellow I should want. Don't you think that he could be persuaded to join our party if I made the terms attractive enough?"

The inspector was a little at a loss how to deal tactfully with the situation.

"As I said before, Mr. Morgan, I am afraid that the proposition is not feasible. Sergeant Weston is quite well off; and monetary compensations would in no way tempt him. Besides," continued the inspector hesitatingly, "Sergeant Weston is an English gentleman, and, as you know, we English have funny ideas. I am afraid that he would view any such offer with displeasure; might even consider it an impertinence. Well, there you are," he ended somewhat lamely.

At this point in the proceedings Corporal Wilson, who up to now had formed an interested audience, got up and left the office. Hiram J.'s notion to hire Weston as guide had struck him as so highly humorous, that he simply had to impart the cheerful news to the constables at once. It would be a choice morsel to dish out to the sergeant on his return, amplified by plenty of additional notes, which Wilson would supply free of charge.

"Oh, I think I understand what you are driving at," in the meantime remarked Hiram J., although the matter was far from clear to him. Why a man, who was content to hold a humble job as a policeman, should jib at a lucrative position as guide to him and party, passed his comprehension. But then these English did have queer notions. "Anyhow," he continued, "the fact remains that we shall want a good, reliable guide. Do you know of any you could recommend, Inspector?"

The inspector pondered for a while. Then he had an inspiration.

"The very man you want is Jim Hayes," he exclaimed. "I think he is around the Barracks, somewhere, at this minute. When the truth has to be told," he smiled, "Mr. Hayes has some slight troubles this morning, and is due for a heart-to-heart talk with the magistrate at noon."

Hiram J.'s mind galloped back to the scene he had witnessed in the front office.

"You don't by any chance by Jim Hayes mean a battered, drunken ruffian, whom I saw being led out of one of the cells a little while ago?"

"Oh, you saw Jim, did you?" queried the inspector, unperturbed. "I suppose he didn't

look his best this morning; seeing that last night he tried to clear out the entire foreign population of this town on his lonesome. And I'm not so sure that he wouldn't have succeeded either, if the boys hadn't stepped in and stopped him. Yes, he is the man I mean."

Hiram J. gazed for some moments at the inspector, aghast at what he had heard.

"You surely can't seriously mean to recommend that disreputable, drunken reprobate as guide for my party," he burst out at last. "Surely you must be joking."

"Not at all," cheerfully answered the inspector. "You misjudge Jim Hayes completely. He is neither a drunkard nor a reprobate; but a highly respected member of society and thoroughly reliable. He very seldom drinks at all; and then on occasions only, when he is at leisure. He has been my trusted guide and companion on many trips into the North, and I can assure you that you can't wish for a better or more efficient and reliable man."

"Well, I must admit that you surprise me considerably," said Hiram J., who was far from convinced of the sterling qualities of Mr. Hayes. "The impression I got of the gentleman was far from favorable or reassuring. However, if you say that he is a good man, it's good enough for me. Would it be too much trouble for you to approach him with regard to the proposition?"

"Not at all. Only too pleased to be of service. If he should decide to take on the job, and I am practically convinced that he will, you can safely leave all the details of the preparations for the trip in his hands. I suppose you have a fairly sizeable outfit?"

"Well," smiled Hiram J., "my outfit is what you might describe as slightly voluminous. You see, I have women-folks in the party; and you may know that travelling with ladies means a pretty hefty luggage."

"I do," said the inspector laconically; he was a married man. "Anyhow," he continued, "I should think the best scheme for you would be to hire a York boat in addition to the canoes you will require up there. To pack the whole outfit for such a big party in canoes only would be well-nigh impracticable. But we will discuss all that with Jim Hayes when he is in his right mind again, say this afternoon or to-mor-

row morning. I am sorry that my own time is rather limited; but I can assure you that both I and my boys will be glad to render you any assistance we can, as far as our duties permit."

THE preparations for the expedition progressed quickly and efficiently after Jim Hayes had taken charge. He had decided to take on the job as guide; and Hiram J. discovered to his satisfaction that the inspector's recommendation of Hayes had not been an exaggeration. He further discovered, as the scars of battle healed, that these had hidden particularly pleasant and cheerful features.

The inspector's promise of assistance from him and his "boys" also proved to be of no idle form of speech. Especially were the corporal and the constables taking an unbounded interest in the party and their affairs. At least for the first few days. Any of them who had a spare moment would rush off and volunteer assistance, particularly if it could be reasonably expected that this would bring them in the close vicinity of the beautiful Miss Morgan.

There was an unusually energetic polishing of boots and buttons in the barrack-room during those first days, and the best tunics and riding-breeches were in constant evidence. But as the goddess, at whose shrine they were worshipping, received their advances with indifferent tolerance only, their enthusiasm gradually waned. Bryan was the first deserter from the ranks of the admirers. One day he had tried to indulge in a few mild and harmless pleasantries while in Miss Morgan's company, only to be left with the firm, though perplexing, conviction that he had been grossly impertinent. Then he considered it time to quit.

However, thanks to the efforts of their corps of assistants, voluntary and hired, the Morgans were able to start out on their journey on the morning of their sixth day's stay at Portage Bend. For the first three days their imposing-looking fleet, consisting of one York boat and six canoes, was towed up the river by one of the tugs belonging to the lumber company, hired for the purpose; but after that they were left to their own devices, as the tug was unable to proceed farther owing to the numerous rapids ahead.

But under Jim Hayes' able leadership all difficulties were capably and efficiently overcome; and already in the early afternoon of the ninth day they had conquered their worst obstacle—Gulch Rapids—and had safely brought their flotilla to the south end of Clear Water Lake. It had, however, been a heart-breaking effort to bring the big York boat up the rapids; but by the help of ropes and tackle and much profanity, this had at last been successfully accomplished.

After a council of war between Hiram J. and Hayes it was decided to camp where they were for the night, as all hands were rather weary after their struggles with the rapids; and in the morning they would get hold of Sergeant Weston, and consult him as to the best place for a permanent camp.

Their camp had a most animated appearance. The York boats and the canoes lined the foreshore, and behind, against the dark green forest, the tents showed up their snowy whiteness; while men were coming and going, and camp-fires crackled here and there.

Hiram J. had by now completely entered into the spirit of things. He had become on quite intimate terms with Jim Hayes and the other hands, and was commencing to enjoy himself thoroughly. And Mrs. Morgan, who was a kind-hearted soul, unspoilt by riches and Society, wholeheartedly followed her husband's lead.

The only two who held aloof were Miss Morgan and the maid, Marie; Miss Morgan because she considered she owed a certain reserve to her status as a prominent member of Society; Marie—née Mary Donovan—because she thought it only right and proper to follow Miss Morgan's lead.

While camp was being prepared Miss Morgan had wandered down to the lake shore; and as she watched the calm, cool wilderness lake, she felt tempted to cruise around for a while in the light canoe which was her own property. She promptly launched the little craft and set out.

For a while she paddled along the shore, enjoying the cool, quiet afternoon; and then, without giving particular heed to where she was going, she rounded the point into Gulch River with never a thought for the strong current and the roaring rapids ahead.

CHAPTER IV

AS Weston and Angus beheld the vision of the girl in the canoe they grew so dumbfounded that they ceased paddling for a few moments, and sat staring at the, to them, inexplicable apparition of a white girl in a canoe in that part of the country! The sergeant was the first to regain his wits.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "She's heading straight for the rapids." He lifted his voice to a shout: "Hey, there! Turn in towards the shore! Danger ahead!"

The girl looked up, startled at these sudden shouts; but apart from that she gave no sign that she had heard the warning.

"Hey!" shouted the sergeant again. "Rapids ahead! Turn towards shore!"

They saw that she now understood; but they also saw, to their horror, that she was unable to turn her canoe in the strong current.

"Quick, Angus! We must catch up with her and I'll board her canoe! She isn't able to handle it herself!" panted the sergeant as he dug his paddle viciously into the water.

In a few minutes they were alongside the run-away. With a warning: "Sit tight!" the sergeant grabbed the stern of the girl's canoe; and while Angus was furiously back-paddling he caught the gunwale on each side of the stern. Slowly—still holding on to his own paddle—he slid on his stomach over the bow of their own canoe and into the stern of that of the girl, dragging his legs after him. It was a manoeuvre which had to be done smoothly and unhurriedly to avoid disaster in the wild-growing current; but, in spite of the handicap, only a few seconds had elapsed before Weston was safely kneeling in the other craft.

"Sheer off, Angus!" he shouted; and then to the girl: "Stop paddling! Lean forward as far as you can and hang on to each side with your hands! Too late to turn! We have to shoot the rapids!"

For perhaps the first time in her life Miss Morgan obeyed another person promptly without hesitation or argument. The swirling, rushing waters around her and the angry roar of the rapids ahead warned her that this was not a time for idle exchanges or quibbling.

Soon the canoe shot into the Gulch, the

waters boiling and roaring around it as it raced forward. The sergeant gave one more warning shout:

"Sit still, and hang on tight! There's no danger!" And he hoped he was telling the truth.

Now they were in the grip of the rapids, and the canoe plunged madly forward on the crest of the boiling waves. Weston swung his paddle harder than he had ever done before in his life, his mouth set in a straight, grim line; and his keen eyes incessantly searched the boiling mass of water ahead for those signs which would warn him where danger lay. To his companion, who crouched low, both hands tightly gripping the gunwales, it sounded as if Bedlam had been turned loose, and that they were in a devil's cauldron. The sound from the angry, raging waters roared in her ears, and the spray swept over her like a heavy shower of rain, and stung her face; while she seemed to be hurled through space at an incredible speed. But almost before she had time to get any clear impression of what was going on around her, the uproar seemed to subside; and soon she felt the canoe gliding along on smoother water again. She straightened up, and saw that they were on the river below the rapids, and that the canoe was heading straight for the bank.

"It's all right. We land here," remarked a cheerful voice behind her; and almost as soon as it was said the canoe grated on the sand by the landing-place at the portage.

Miss Morgan clambered ashore; while the sergeant turned around to see how Angus had fared. To his great relief he saw Angus paddling serenely towards them; and he turned his attention to the girl, who was standing on the shore, watching him curiously.

For a few seconds they sized each other up in silence; and the result was that they both experienced a feeling of surprise.

The events on the river had passed too quickly for them to be able to take stock of each other, and Miss Morgan had therefore expected her rescuer to be a rough son of the great open spaces. But now she discovered that, although his dress came up to sample, his clear-cut, clean-shaven features, which bore the unmistakable stamp of refinement and breeding, gave the lie to this supposition. And she won-

dered who he was, and how he happened to be there.

The sergeant, on the other hand, had expected to find that the girl was the wife or the daughter of one of the denizens of the North; but he found that he had to revise his opinion. Although the sergeant's experience of women's garments had grown somewhat rusty, he at once noted that the frock which the girl was wearing could only have been worn by one of the lucky on whom bank-managers beam. Even a Hudson's Bay factor would not be able to furnish that kind of dress to any of his women-folks. He was, further, not blind to the fact that she was beautiful, and that she had Society stamped largely over her—and he marvelled. For a well-dressed, beautiful Society-woman had been a hitherto unknown specimen up in those parts of the world.

As the sergeant felt that the silence was becoming slightly embarrassing, he bestirred himself and climbed out of the canoe.

"I hope you didn't get very wet," he addressed the girl, removing his battered hat.

"Not very, thank you," she answered courteously.

"Sorry I shouted somewhat loudly at you; but there wasn't much time," continued the sergeant.

"It was a bit startling, I must admit. But, as you say, there was not much time for the niceties of convention. I am, however, very grateful to you for coming to my assistance."

"Please don't mention it," answered Weston, and again silence settled down over them. The sergeant groped around frantically in his mind for something bright to say; but for once his conversational abilities refused to come up to the mark. But the arrival of Angus furnished a welcome diversion. As he beached his canoe beside the one by which the girl and Weston were standing, Weston turned to him and shouted the first words which entered his head, so as to break that uncomfortable silence:

"Did you ship any water, Angus?"

"Huh!" snorted Angus contemptuously; and he wondered how the sergeant—normally the sanest of men—could frame such an unreasonable and idiotic question. But the interlude had given Weston time to collect his disorganized faculties, mental and conversational.

"I suppose your party is somewhere around?" he inquired politely of the girl.

"Yes. They are camping at the south end of Clear Water Lake. My parents and I are going to spend some time up there, fishing and shooting."

THIS information fairly staggered the sergeant, and acted on him as a distinct shock. One of the chief attractions of Clear Water Lake in his eyes had been its perfect privacy and the entire absence of intruders. And now it looked as if his pet, private domain was to be invaded by a swarm of what he mentally styled "trippers!" He felt quite peeved and annoyed at the prospect, but his innate courtesy came to his rescue in time, and enabled him to answer her politely, though without any undue enthusiasm:

"Are you really? Then I shall probably see you up there. I am camping on Clear Water myself."

"Oh," she exclaimed. "Then you are probably Sergeant Weston?"

"Yes, I am," he admitted with considerable surprise. "But how did you guess?"

"That was really not very difficult. You see, my father, Mr. Morgan—I am Miss Morgan, by the way—saw your inspector at Portage Bend, and he told my father that you were camping up here. As a matter of fact, the inspector also told my father that you might be able to assist us in finding a suitable site for our permanent camp."

"I'll only be too pleased to help you," answered Weston politely; but the unkind thoughts milling about in his head about his superior officer would have formed ample material for a court martial. "By the way," he continued, "don't you think we had better get started for your camp? They may be becoming anxious at your absence. I'll pack your canoe across the portage for you, if you don't mind."

"Thanks ever so much. Yes, I suppose I had better get back."

Weston thereupon informed Angus, who had remained seated in the canoe, that he was going to see Miss Morgan across the portage; but that he would be back presently and help pack their own outfit across. Angus's only answer was a curt nod.

"Your servant seems to be rather a surly individual," remarked Miss Morgan presently, as they were striding along the trail, Weston carrying her canoe on his head.

"My what?" asked the sergeant in surprise.

"Isn't that Indian your servant?"

"Angus? Good Lord, no!" chuckled Weston. "He is a great pal of mine. And, by the way, he is not an Indian, but a half-breed. Angus Mackenzie is his name, and he is inordinately proud of his Scotch blood, which is not, I must admit, very much in evidence in his general appearance. And he is far from surly; only somewhat reserved and taciturn."

Miss Morgan made no comment on this. She was, frankly, not a bit interested in Angus, his antecedents or peculiarities. But what did strike her was that the sergeant had a somewhat peculiar taste in the selection of his friends; and he accordingly sank considerably in her estimation. But of that the sergeant was sublimely unaware, nor would it have bothered him particularly had he known.

When they arrived at the other end of the portage Miss Morgan thanked him, and declared that it was not necessary for him to see her to the camp, as she was quite capable of handling the canoe for the rest of the distance.

Weston watched her till her canoe had disappeared round the bend into the lake.

"Darn pretty; but looks like a confoundedly uppish kind of a dame," he confided to himself. "It will be becoming lovely around here, if the rest of the outfit is like her."

And he returned very thoughtfully down the trail. He was feeling rather abused, and had unpleasant forebodings for the future.

CHAPTER V

IN the hustle and bustle of preparing camp Miss Morgan's absence had passed unnoticed for some time. It was only when all the preparations were nearly finished and her mother happened to want her, that it was discovered that she was missing. Hiram J. immediately started out to investigate, and ran into Jim Hayes.

"Have you seen my daughter, Hayes?" he inquired.

"No. I ain't saw her for a spell. Ain't she in her tent?"

"No. Neither her mother nor the maid have seen her for some time."

"She's gone for a stroll in the woods

most likely, or for a paddle on the lake. But I'll find out."

Hayes strolled over to a group of the half-breeds; and on questioning them, he found a man who remembered having seen Miss Morgan launch her canoe. Further inquiries elicited the startling information from another man that he had seen her paddling toward Gulch River.

"Gosh-damn-it, you all-fired fool!" burst fiercely for Hayes, when he heard this. "Why didn't you tell me at the time?"

"Me no think she damn fool go into river," explained the half-breed in extenuation.

"You no think!" fairly shouted Jim Hayes in his rage. "That's the trouble with all you guys, that you never do think nothin', 'cept how to dodge work. Don't you know that a cheechako don't know nothin' of this country, an' is liable to do any damn fool trick, you—!" And Jim Hayes gave his tongue free rein for a spell.

"Come on you, Albert!" he shouted to one of the men, as soon as his store of swear-words was fairly exhausted. "You an' me'll chase after her!"

As they hurried down to the lake they met Mr. Morgan.

"What is the hurry, Hayes?" he inquired. "Anything wrong?"

"Nothing much," answered Hayes reassuringly. "I just found out that Miss Morgan has gone on the lake, and I thought I'd better go along an' collect her."

"Thank you so much. Tell her her mother wants her."

"Gosh, I hope we'll be able to deliver that there message," muttered Hayes under his breath, as he once more turned toward the shore.

Just as Hayes and Albert were about to push off Hiram J., who had followed them, exclaimed:

"Here she is coming, Hayes."

Hayes looked up, and sure enough, there was Miss Morgan just appearing from behind a point, and came paddling steadily along, straight for the camp.

"Gosh darn it, if that ain't some relief! I was sure some worried," he ejaculated fervently.

"Worried?" asked Hiram J., surprised. "Why?"

"Well, as I've made a break, I might as well give you the whole thing straight. One of the men told me that he'd seen Miss Morgan paddle toward the river, an' as that

particular river ain't what might be called a safe playground for any tenderfoot—leaving alone a girl—I got some uneasy. There is an ugly current in there, and then there are rapids!" Jim Hayes ended with an eloquent gesture.

"Good God, man!" exclaimed Hiram J., aghast. "You weren't thinking that my daughter . . .?" He couldn't get the words out.

"In such cases I don't think, but go to find out," answered Hayes succinctly. "But luckily everything is fine an' dandy now."

A few minutes afterwards Miss Morgan beached her canoe near where the men were standing.

"Hallo, daughter!" greeted Hiram J., as soon as she had stepped ashore; while Hayes and Albert lifted her canoe out of the water and placed it bottom up on the beach. "Where have you been all this time?"

"Oh, I have just been for a little trip on the lake and down the river."

"What's that?" broke in Hayes sharply. "Down the river? How far'd you go?"

Jim Hayes was not a favorite with Miss Morgan. She found his manner towards her far too familiar and lacking in the respect she considered her due; and she thought it was about time to show him his proper place. She, therefore, turned to him and said icily and with considerable hauteur:

"I cannot quite see how that is any concern of yours, Mr. Hayes."

"Excuse me for contradictin' you, miss," answered Hayes evenly, not a bit abashed. "I'm paid to look after the welfare an' safety of your little lot; and as long as I hold that job it's my business to see that none of you go an' get mixed up in no trouble. You must remember, miss, that you are in a country you don't know nothin' about, an' as long as I have the responsibility"—long words rarely came readily to Hayes' tongue—"of lookin' after this picnic, I'll thank you to come an' see me before you start on any trip, so that I can tell you where it's safe to play, an' where it ain't. Ain't that so, Mr. Morgan?"

To Miss Morgan's chagrin her father promptly deserted his old ally, and went over to the enemy.

"Hayes is quite right, my dear," he said. "And I am sure that you also see the justice of his point of view."

Miss Morgan thought of rebellion for a

calledew moments; but being at heart a fair-minded girl, she determined at last that she would only belittle herself by such an attitude.

"Very well, I shall give you a full account of the afternoon's events," she announced a little defiantly. "First I paddled around the lake for a while, and then I turned down the river. As I was paddling along, I heard somebody shouting to me to turn the canoe towards the shore; and on looking up I saw two men who were sitting in a canoe which had just turned out from another river down there, just above the rapids. As the current was too strong for me to turn, the strange canoe came alongside my own; one of the men climbed into my canoe; and he shot the rapids with me."

"God'll-mighty!" broke in Hayes, popped with excitement. "Do you mean that one of them fellars jumped into your canoe in that fierce current by Grassy Hill River? It can't be did!"

"He did it nevertheless!" was Miss Morgan's rather sharp retort.

"Was he an Injun?"

"No. He was a white man. As a matter of fact, he informed me that he was Sergeant Weston."

Hayes smote his thigh a resounding slap.

"I might a-known it!" he boomed. "There is only him would a-ried a foolhardy trick like that!" Then he eyed Miss Morgan curiously for a few seconds. "I suppose you don't know that you were in some considerable danger, young lady?" he queried at last.

"Oh, there did not seem to be much danger," answered the girl shortly. She was wishing that Hayes would speak a little more grammatically, and that he would not address her as "young lady."

"Well, let me tell you there was, and then some!" snapped Hayes. "It didn't seem no danger to you. Cause why? 'Cause you had with you in the canoe one of the finest canoemen in the whole of this part of the country. And let me tell you something else. Perhaps you noticed them stakes in that backwater below the rapids? You didn't? Well they are there—about a dozen of them. An' you know what they are? They are the head-stones over the graves of people who didn't think there was no danger in shootin' them rapids; an' they wasn't all tenderfeet either! And as to shiftin' from one canoe to another in that current—well, there ain't many who could

a-done it. I for one don't think I could have found the nerve to try; an' even if I had, I'd most likely have upset the whole box of tricks. So you were mighty lucky, fallin' in with Weston!" He stopped, almost out of breath.

HIRAM J., who had listened to Hayes' outburst in a silence which grew more and more horrified, now chimed in:

"Do you mean to tell me, Hayes, that my daughter's life was actually in immediate danger?" he almost gasped.

"Just so!" answered Hayes laconically.

"But this is terrible. How could you be so reckless, daughter?" he inquired, some reproach in his voice.

"I didn't know there was any danger, father," she answered somewhat uncertainly and contritely. And she spoke the truth. Until Hayes' words had made the situation clear to her, she had merely considered her experience an interesting and slightly exciting incident. And she reflected that she, perhaps, had treated somewhat nonchalantly the man who had apparently saved her life. "Anyhow," she continued, "Sergeant Weston didn't seem to treat the affair as if there had been any elements of danger in it."

"No, he wouldn't," snorted Hayes scornfully. "He's that kind of a guy. 'Anyhow,' he concluded, 'the court havin' heard the evidence we might as well adjourn. Is Weston comin' this way to-night, miss?'"

"I really forgot to ask him," answered Miss Morgan rather defiantly. She had an uneasy feeling that she was not exactly coming out of the situation with flying colors; especially as she found Hayes' eyes fixed on her, watching her curiously. "Anyhow, I told him that we wanted to consult him with regard to a camp-site; and he said he would be pleased to assist us." Then she had an inspiration. "Oh, wait a minute. The sergeant helped me carry my canoe across the portage, and before we left the lower end of the portage he told the man who was with him that he would be back and help carry their outfit across the portage. That sounds as if he were coming this way, does it not?"

"It does that," answered Hayes shortly. The situation was a bit beyond him. Even common courtesy ought to have prompted the girl to invite Weston to visit the camp, he reflected, and she had not even asked him whence he came or whither he was go-

ing. But then, of course, these folks from "outside" did have queer ways and notions. . . .

"I think I'll run across to the portage an' see what ol' Wess is doin'," he said to Mr. Morgan, interrupting his reflections.

"Dol And bring him along with you if you can," said Hiram J. heartily. "I am very anxious to see him, and thank him for the great service he has rendered my daughter."

The party split up. Hiram J. and his daughter went towards the camp, and Hayes put one of the canoes into the water.

"Won't ol' Wess be de-lighted when I tell him that the brass trumpets are waitin' for him at this here camp?" he inquired of himself with a grin as he paddled along. "I don't think! I'd better keep close about that thankin'-business or chances are that he'll fight shy of my little flock."

He discovered Weston and Angus at the near end of the portage, about to load their outfit into their canoe.

"Hello, Wess! Hello, Angus!" he shouted cheerily, as soon as he was within hailing distance.

Weston and Angus straightened up from their task, and discovered the lone man in the canoe.

"Hang it, if it isn't Jim Hayes," exclaimed Weston. "Wonder what he's doing up here?"

Soon Jim Hayes had beached his canoe, and joyfully the three exchanged the compliments of the season.

"What are you doing up here, Jim?" queried Weston as soon as the formalities were over.

"Playin' nursemaid to a party of big guys from Noo York City, of both sexes," answered Jim promptly.

"So I guessed. Who are they, anyhow?"

"Wall," drawled Jim. "There is first Pa Morgan, a millionaire. Then there is Ma Morgan; an' the daughter; an' a skirt what does the chores around the ladies. Then there is ten breeds, an' old Ben Giddy as cook. Gosh, some little outfit oun, believe mu!"

"I understand the party are going to camp up on the lake, is that right?" Asked Weston.

"That's the big idea. You heard it from Miss Morgan, I gather. I understand you

an' her had a picnic down the river t afternoon."

"Can't women ever keep their mouth shut?" queried the sergeant.

"They never could," observed Hayes sagely. "Anyhow, truth to tell, I kind forced the story out of her. I gathered from what she told me that there was som doin's."

"Oh, there was nothing to it," said Weston impatiently. "I saw she was a tender foot by the way she handled her paddle. Anyhow, she's got plenty of nerve. Took the whole thing as cool as a cucumber."

"That's where you're wrong, Wess. She told me she didn't think there was n danger; so what kept her cool was iggonorance, and not guts!"

The sergeant decided to change the conversation promptly.

"Look here, Jim," he said. "Correct me if I'm wrong. But certain marks on your face seem to indicate stormy events in not distant past. What have you been up to?"

"Got drunk in the Bend; an' tried to clean up a Russian weddin'," explained Hayes shortly.

"It must have been a whale of a scrap from the looks of your face," commented Weston, grinning broadly.

"Tol'ably so. I don't remember much o it myself. Was too jagged. However, that's not what I came to see you about. Mr Morgan sent me along. He wants your expert advice on fixin' on a camp-site for them; seein' you are the rulin' nabob up here. Are you comin' along?"

"Might as well," answered Weston, who was curious to see the whole outfit. "Let's get started, if you think you can stop gassing long enough."

"Who's gassin'?" demanded Hayes over his shoulder as his canoe shot out on the river. "You are, Wess!" he shouted when he thought he had gained a safe distance. "You're as full o' wind as any o' them Ot-tawa politicians!"

The sod which Weston promptly threw at him, missed by only the fraction of an inch; but an energetic spurt soon placed him out of range.

Weston was received very graciously by the Morgans; but for the first uncomfortable minutes he earnestly wished himself elsewhere. If he could have known that he was destined to listen to such tripe as his

CHAPTER VI

HIRAM J. and party all agreed on the following morning that the camp-site was all that the sergeant had promised. Hiram J. declared that the place was "just right;" Mrs. Morgan that it was "just cute;" while Miss Morgan agreed, but substituted the more dignified adjective "delightful."

The camp was rapidly run up under the able and energetic supervision of Weston and Hayes. Weston had suggested building log-cabins; but this proposal had been energetically vetoed by the Morgans. They all declared that living under canvas would give them a more free and easy feeling of "roughing it." A concession was made in regard to Ben Giddy, the cook, who soon found himself sole and absolute ruler of a roomy cook-shack.

A rough stone jetty was run into the bay in order to reduce to a minimum the acrobatics attendant on climbing in and out of canoes; and on the top of the highest hill by the camp a kind of summer-house with rustic seats had been erected, principally for the convenience of Mrs. Morgan, who declared that she was getting too old for too much gadding about. And in this aerie—from which she had a splendid view of the lake with its dark-green islands, and the surrounding spruce-clad hills and ridges—she spent many happy hours.

The other members of the party gave themselves up to the pleasures of the gun and rod.

Weston offered to initiate Miss Morgan into the ways and peculiarities of the country for the first days or so; only to find out that he had created for himself a veritable Frankenstein monster. He simply could not get rid of his self-appointed job, which he had intended to be purely temporary. He was not told directly that he was expected to look after Miss Morgan. He was simply asked when parting each night what time he would be around to pick up the girl on the following morning; and he frankly lacked the moral courage to stick up for his rights for fear of appearing churlish and unneighborly.

He cudgelled his brains for a not too pointed and tactful way out of his dilemma; but the normally vivid cells for once seemed to have succumbed to a state of coma. So he decided that he had to accept the situa-

your daughter's life under very difficult circumstances, etc., he would have given the camp a wide berth. But as it was, he was fairly caught; and there was nothing for it but to take his medicine like a man.

Eventually the speeches petered out, to his intense satisfaction; and a council of war was held with the sergeant acting as chief speaker and expert adviser.

He gladdened the hearts of his audience by announcing that he knew of an almost ideal camp-site for them. The place he had in mind was on the eastern shore of the lake, some three miles up. It was on a sandy bay, sheltered by two points, which curved out into the lake like two horns, their tips converging. Between the two tips, was a narrow, deep entrance into the sheltered bay, which was deep and roomy. It was a pleasing vista which he rolled up before them, and his hearers rejoiced.

It was at once proposed and carried that they move up to this promised land on the following morning. The whole meeting was so charged with good-will, and Weston's hearers exuded such a strong spirit of geniality, that he found himself, to his subsequent surprise, offering his services in fixing the camp; an offer which was promptly and gratefully accepted.

The council then rose, and Weston was invited to take supper with the Morgans. He promptly accepted, as he was eager to get to know as much as possible about his new neighbors. He was already inclined to like Mr. and Mrs. Morgan; but about the daughter he kept an open mind, beyond admitting to himself that she was certainly pleasing to the eye.

After supper Mr. Morgan wanted to know all about the fishing and shooting; and it was quite late when he at last broke up, after having delighted his hosts by presenting them with a haunch of venison.

The Morgan family in full strength watched him and Angus set out for their island home. As the canoe gradually was drawing away on the dark lake in the gathering twilight, Hiram J. remarked:

"That seems an excellent young man, and a thorough gentleman!" He had been observing and appraising Weston closely, and the net result of his observations was summed up in that remark, and a mental twinge of embarrassment, which he felt when he remembered that he had actually intended to offer Weston a job as guide!

tion with as good grace as possible, if not with unrestrained cheer.

He found Miss Morgan a little difficult. She was exacting and not a little inclined to be haughty and imperious. Already from the start he discovered in her a pronounced lack of enthusiasm for her surroundings. He at once commenced to point out to her the various wonders and beauties of the country. But his efforts fell on barren soil. His most enthusiastic descriptions were met with a rather indifferent: "Oh, yes. The scenery is quite nice, I suppose; but terribly monotonous." And, once, when he was cheerfully telling of the sterling qualities and virtues of the inhabitants, she interrupted him by saying that to her they appeared a crowd of rough, rude, and rather dirty ruffians.

Under the circumstances Weston found his earnest endeavors so much waste of breath, and soon gave up his efforts.

All in all, he found that his pleasant scheme for a quiet, enjoyable holiday had sprung a leak; but he decided to keep the good ship floating.

However, he was careful to keep his grievances strictly private. Not even to his cronies, Jim Hayes and Angus, did he divulge his dark secret, for fear of having them secretly gloating over his self-inflicted misery. To screen his perplexity from prying eyes he strove to present a consistently cheerful front to his surroundings; and he succeeded so well that Hayes and Angus got ideas which would have brought him to the utmost edge of vexation, had he been aware of them. That Weston, who was famed for his chasing around by his lonesome without any ties, should suddenly have chosen to roam constantly around with a beautiful girl, could only have one meaning, decided Hayes and Angus in their simplicity of mind.

Angus confined himself to shaking his head and murmuring the Cree equivalent for: "Boys will be boys," and finding himself more or less deserted, he gave himself up to the congenial task of loafing. He could now mostly be found amongst the waiting members of the Camp Morgan crew, smoking, chatting, and taking his ease generally. So he was far from heartbroken at the turn of events. As a matter of fact, he was beginning to feel that the outing was developing into something very like the ideal, as far as he was concerned.

Jim Hayes was also inclined to view the

situation with satisfaction. He was, of course, genuinely concerned to see Weston fall for a pretty-faced doll, as he unkindly expressed it; but at the same time his concern did not blind his view of the silvery lining to the clouds. Miss Morgan always had managed to rub him the wrong way, and now she was off his hands, he thought complacently.

And Hiram J. felt that things had arranged themselves to his entire and unqualified satisfaction. With the sergeant as his daughter's guide he was free to appropriate Jim Hayes for his sole and undivided disposal; and the two roamed joyfully around together, Hiram J. feeling like a boy playing hookey from school.

Miss Morgan and Weston on their part explored the woods and the lake. At first the girl was not a steady performer with the gun; and consequently Weston had to introduce her to easy targets in the form of feeding partridges. These deluded birds would stick ruggedly to their feeding ground, when instinct ought to have warned them that they had urgent business elsewhere; and several fell victims to Miss Morgan's wobbly gun. But under the sergeant's able tutelage, and through constant practice, she soon advanced so far that she began considering sitting birds unworthy as sporting propositions.

In the evenings they would take a canoe and pay visits to the trout and bass, which frequented the bays of the lake.

So the days glided peacefully along at Clear Water Lake.

IN his rambles with Hayes, Hiram J. asked many questions of the former about Weston and his work. For that young man had commenced to interest him considerably. And Hayes obligingly related choice incidents from the sergeant's not uneventful past. Hiram J. was, however, frankly skeptical about the authenticity of some of these stories. To him Weston appeared so quiet, conventional and even gentle in his ways that he could not quite visualize him in the parts of dare-devil rough-neck which Hayes allotted to him in the various dramas he unfolded. And on one occasion he voiced his skepticism to Hayes.

"Wess gentle?" repeated Hayes with a grin. "Well, you wouldn't o' thought so if you'd seen him in action. Mind you, he ain't one of them guys what goes huntin' for trouble. He goes out of his way to keep

things peaceful-like, if he can. But, if trouble comes his way, he ain't exactly bashful. He's all there, believe me! when he first gets started. I've seen him on his lonesome wade into a whole bunch of ugly bohunks, what didn't see eye to eye with him in the matter of a rumpus; but, take it from me, they sure did by the time Wess was through with 'em. Oh, boy!" a fierce enthusiasm crept into his voice, "it's sure a grand an' glorious sight to see Wess cut loose! There ain't no flies on him, lemme tell you!"

"I really can't believe that Weston is so much of a savage," persisted Hiram J.

Hayes pondered for a bit.

"By savage, do you mean rough-neck?" he inquired.

"Well, you may put it that way, I suppose," answered Hiram J., having given the matter due consideration.

"Then you are quite off the rails!" averred Hayes firmly. "Gosh, Wess ain't no rough-neck. Not usually, that is. He wouldn't hurt a fly, Wess wouldn't, if the fly would behave. But you see, we are a rough bunch up here," he explained candidly, "an' I guess rough stuff is the only stuff that gets acrost, if you want to handle the bunch. You can't handle 'em with no kid-gloves. The only way is to put the fear of God into them, an' Wess is the boy to do it. Anybody who's pulled off a mean stunt, feels considerably uneasy if he knows that Wess is on to him. There ain't much gentleness about him when he bucks up against ornariness an' meanness. He is a regular wild-cat, he is, when he gets goin' good; an' the tougher the proposition is he gets mixed up in, the better he likes it!"

"Well, I wouldn't have believed it," commented Hiram J., as he turned his attention to a fish, which had investigated, more closely than was safe, the troll, which was trailing behind the canoe in which the two were seated. "I always thought he looked too meek and mild for a man who'd wade into trouble and enjoy it."

"Other people have thought the same about old Wess," grinned Hayes. "But they soon found out their mistake to their sorrier."

"I'd like to see him in action some day," remarked Hiram J., as he was unhooking his catch. "If what you say is true, it must be worth while watching."

"Well, I guess it would be some little eyepener. But you won't get a chance," said Hayes, manly regret in his voice. "There

ain't nothin' up here for Wess to get busy on."

A few days later a hunting party to Grassy Hills was organized. The party consisted of Hiram J., Miss Morgan, Weston, Jim Hayes, Angus and three half-breeds. They set out in three canoes. One was piloted by Hayes and a half-breed and had Hiram J. as a passenger, another by Weston an Angus with Miss Morgan as passenger, and the third canoe, which was piloted by the two other half-breeds, accommodated the commissariat for the trip.

As they neared the mouth of Grassy Hill River, Jim Hayes pointed out to Hiram J. the spot where Weston had boarded his daughter's canoe from his own; and Hiram J. shuddered. He did not feel too comfortable in the boiling current as it was, with two experts handling his canoe; and as for jumping from one canoe to another . . . The mere thought made him feel dizzy, and almost caused him to break out in a cold sweat.

In the valleys and on the slopes of the Grassy Hills the landscape is covered with foliage-bearing trees, and broad meadows lush with grass. And these meadows form the pastures for numerous herds of jumping-deer. Down by the river, at the foot of the hills, the hunting party pitched their camp; and extensive preparations were made for an energetic campaign against the unsuspecting deer. It was agreed, as a matter of course, that Hiram J. and his daughter were to do the actual shooting; while Hayes and Weston were to act as guides and reserves. Angus was to act as general scout, and two half-breeds were to follow the party to carry back the spoils of war.

Bright and early on their first morning they set out to penetrate into the hills. After about an hour's tramp they were met by Angus, who informed them that there was a herd grazing on the other side of a hill which was then facing them. Immense excitement, especially on the part of Hiram J., who had never before in his life shot anything bigger than a rabbit! He made a movement as if he wanted to make a dash for the hill; but he was brought up short by Hayes' hand on his arm.

"Whoa, there!" whispered Hayes softly. "You don't think you can shoot deers that-a-way! You have to go easy and more'n that. How's the wind, Angus?"

"Good," answered Angus.

"Well, now, listen here. You'll have to move up to that hill as careful an' quiet as a guy what's beatin' it from a rest'rnt without payin' his bill. When you get to the crest, you'll have to wriggle forward on your stomachs till you get a squint at them deers. Then you lie quite still an' don't breathe more'n you can help. I'll point out to you, Mr. Morgan, the most likely deer to fire at; an' Weston'll do the same for your daughter. All understood?"

Hiram J., who was quivering like a dog held back on a leash, nodded briefly. He was immensely excited and eager to get into action. His daughter signified by a graceful inclination of her head that she had also understood the instructions. Even in this exciting situation she managed to retain her serene, unruffled pose.

The party moved slowly and carefully forward, and all went well. When they had at last wriggled into positions amongst the trees at the crest of the hill, they looked down a gentle slope towards a fairly wide valley through which a small brook meandered its way. Birches and poplars grew scattered on the grass-covered slope and in the valley, and the green grass at the foot of the hill was dotted with the tan and white shapes of the scattered, peacefully grazing deer. One buck was grazing away from the main herd, some way up the slope; and it stood out in plain sight not a hundred yards in front of the hunters. This buck was pointed out both by Weston and Hayes to their respective principal as the prospective victim. Hiram J. and daughter then raised their rifles to their shoulders, took careful aim—and let fly; Hiram J. leading by a short neck.

THE result of the shots was instantaneous. The deer were galvanized into immediate action before the echoes of the reports had died away, and, with those jerky jumps which have given them their name, they bounced madly up the valley in wild flight. The buck had made one wild jump, when a third shot rang out. It seemed to crumple up in mid-air, crashed heavily to earth, and lay shivering spasmodically for a few moments before it straightened out and became still and rigid.

"I got him! I got him!" shouted Hiram J., jumping up and rushing forward triumphantly; brandishing his rifle.

The others followed him more soberly to

where he stood contemplating the fallen buck with the air of a conqueror.

"Fine shot of mine, daughter. Eh?" Hiram remarked in a slightly patronizing voice, beaming on the party.

"I am not so sure that it was not I who shot it," countered his daughter.

"Eh? What's that? But you didn't shoot at the same deer as I did, did you?" inquired Hiram J. a little taken aback.

"Yes, I did. This was the buck that Weston pointed out to me, and it was certainly the deer I fired at."

Jim Hayes, who had listened with amusement to the colloquy between father and daughter, now bent down and examined the fallen buck.

"There is only one bullet gone into the critter," he pronounced. "An' I guess it'll be hard to decide which gun that bullet came out of."

But now the sergeant, who considered it only right and proper to stick up for his pupil, chimed in:

"I am afraid I must support Miss Morgan's claim," he said seriously. "I was watching very closely, and I distinctly saw her bullet strike."

"Saw the bullet strike? That is impossible!" asserted Hiram J.

"It is not at all impossible," averred the sergeant. "It is easy to see a bullet strike if you train your eye to it. Isn't that so, Jim?" he appealed to Hayes.

"Sure!" agreed that faithful disciple of George Washington with his best poker face.

But at this point Angus—who had been an interested and keen observer caused a diversion.

"Sergeant shoot buck. Dam' fine shot," he declared shortly and truthfully. For the sergeant had seen from the actions of the buck that the shots from Hiram J. and his daughter had both been misses; and he had therefore fired that third shot, which had killed the buck, just as the latter was going to depart with the rest of the herd.

"What is that? You didn't shoot, Sergeant, did you?" exclaimed Hiram J., bewildered; and his daughter turned questioning eyes on the sergeant. In the excitement of the moment neither of them had noticed that three shots had been fired.

"Well, I did send a shot after the herd at haphazard," admitted the sergeant, staring coldly at Angus, "but my shot did not get anywhere near this buck," he lied stoutly.

fall "As I said before, the honor is Miss Morgan's."

h?" Hiram J. stared for a few moments at Weston, dark suspicion in his gaze; but Weston did not reveal by a quivering eye-wash, even, that he had a burdened conscience.

did "Well, daughter," said Hiram J. at last, you disappointed, disgusted and only half convinced, "I suppose the first trick is yours. t M. Anyhow," he continued more cordially. se "you have my heartiest congratulations on your first buck."

mus. They did not get within active range of any more deer that day. But early on the following morning they set out again, and then success attended Hiram J. He actually shot a deer! And under circumstances which precluded any doubts.

He and Hayes had, somehow, become separated from the rest of the party for the moment, and as they advanced through a clump of tree, they discovered an unsuspecting buck, grazing in a glade, not more than fifty yards in front of them. Quickly Hiram J. raised his gun and fired. The buck made a half-jump into the air, came down stiffly on all four legs, stood for a while swaying; but then gradually its legs began to give way, and it sank down into a kneeling position, rolled slowly over on its side and lay still.

Hiram J. was jubilant.

"Some shot, eh, Hayes? No doubt as to whose bullet Weston would have seen strike that time!" he shouted triumphantly.

No more deer were shot that day, and on the following morning the proud hunters returned to Clear Water Lake.

As they were tramping across a ridge on their way back to their temporary camp on the last afternoon of their stay in the Grassy Hills, Angus had touched the sergeant on the arm, and had pointed out to him a vague, light haze—almost indiscernible to the naked eye—which was hovering over some hills several miles to the north.

"Forest fire?" had Weston inquired somewhat anxiously.

"No, camp. Saw same smoke, same place, yesterday," answered Angus conversationally.

"I wonder who can be camping up there?" mused Weston idly. "Must be some prospectors, I suppose." And with that plausible explanation he lost all further interest in the incident; and had forgotten it long before they had reached camp.

CHAPTER VII

GRASSY HILL RIVER has its source in a lake somewhere up in the neighborhood of the Barrens.

It meanders slowly in and out between the spruce-clad hills towards the south, till it at one point makes a sudden dash towards the west, as if it had made up its mind to end its career in the water of Clear Water Lake. However, some miles before it reaches the lake it turns abruptly towards the south-east, skirts Grassy Hills, and eventually empties itself into the Gulch River.

A couple of miles up the river, a tributary flows into the Grassy Hill River from the east. For the last miles before it joins the larger river this tributary broadens to what is almost a bay between the hills that rear up on each side of it.

Some way up this bay a little brook comes happily gurgling and babbling down a slope on the north side. If one follows this brook up the hill-side, one first gets to a narrow rift in the hills from which the brook emerges. If one passes through this defile one finds oneself in a basin, which is screened on all sides by spruce-covered hills. The basin itself is fairly wide, and its level floor is smooth and grass-covered. On the opposite side to the entrance the brook comes hurling down the hill-side like a minor cascade, and splashes into a little lake which has formed at the bottom.

In this pleasant basin a camp had been erected. In amongst the spruces on one side of the basin were three tents. Two stood side by side in front, and the third tent stood some distance behind.

The two foremost tents were occupied respectively, one by Messrs. Joe and Slippery, and one by their two half-breed guides. The third tent was earmarked as the prospective abode of Miss Morgan.

The camp-site had been well chosen, and suited to perfection the retiring habits of Joe and Slippery. Their two guides had pointed out this place to them when they had been informed by their worthy patrons that those gentlemen wanted to lead an unostentatious existence somewhere in the neighborhood of Clear Water Lake; though with the further stipulation that a reasonable number of miles and an easy, but track-proof, trail must lie between camp and lake.

Slippery and Joe had subjected the site to a close scrutiny from every point of the surrounding country, and had finally de-

cided that the basin would do admirably. Any camp there would be completely screened from the gaze of even the keenest eyes. And when the trail to Clear Water Lake was pointed out to them, and they found that it was twice broken by running water, the worthy couple unanimously agreed that the location was "Jake"!

But they had completely overlooked one important factor: the heat from the camp-fire.

True, they had given the matter due consideration, as they thought. They had issued strict orders that only perfectly dry wood was to be used for the fires. Having issued this fiat they considered the contingency of the smoke from their fires revealing their whereabouts reduced to nil; as they had always understood that dry wood emits no smoke.

But, as they were no woodsmen, there was one peculiar fact in regard to camp-fires of which they were in ignorance. Often, especially in the afternoons, a cool current of air will stream over the tree-tops in the forests, and when the heat from a fire down in the timbers meets this cooler current of air, the heated air will condense, and will hover like a fine haze directly over the site of the fire. This haze, if seen from above, can be seen for quite some distance—white as it stands out against the dark green of the forest—and to the practiced, keen eyes of those whose lives are being spent in the lonely places of the North this haze is a sign which is read unerringly. As we know, the camp of Joe and Slippery had already been spotted by the lynx-eyed Angus from Grassy Hills.

But of this fly in the ointment Messrs. Joe and Slippery were in blissful ignorance.

Their guides could have enlightened them; but probably they did not think the matter of sufficient practical importance to bring to the notice of their employers, and, besides, they were both intensely peeved, and not at all disposed to volunteer information.

They had, so far, not been taken into the confidence of their patrons as to the actual aim and object of the expedition; and there was a certain odor about the whole enterprise which was unpleasant to their Indian noses. There was this mysterious, unoccupied third tent, furnished with what was to them the acme of luxury; and then there were the even more mysterious movements of the two bosses. Every morning, when the

day was still in its infancy, the two gentlemen would leave camp, taking with them ample provisions for a long day's outing; and every night they would return as was snappy and disagreeable. And not only keep they not once invited any of their guides to accompany them, but they had even issued strict orders that they were not to be followed and, furthermore, that under no circumstances were the guides to show themselves at Clear Water Lake. And all this secrecy annoyed the two breeds intensely. But they were perfectly well aware by this time, that there was something bigger on the cards than mere claim-jumping; and between them they had made a pretty near guess as to the true state of affairs. And they both agreed that it was dirty business.

They were not exactly bothered by moral scruples. They would cheerfully have aided and abetted in any piece of devilry provided the pay was adequate. But it was this being left out in the cold which hurt. And they jointly and collectively decided to let Messrs. Joe and Slippery paddle their own canoe, and do their own dirty work.

So one bright and early morning Slippery and Joe were padding disconsolately across the portage on their way to Clear Water Lake. Between them they carried their canoe, right side up, their paddles and provisions deposited in the bottom. One was grabbing the stern and the other the bow, and their progress was more reminiscent of a funeral procession than that of two brisk men of affairs, bent on important business.

The sun was still so low on the northeast horizon that its rays only caught the tops of the tall spruces which lined each side of the trail. The air still retained that chill, dreary morning dampness; and this fact did not tend to sweeten the two gentlemen's already soured dispositions.

Presently they dropped the canoe on the trail.

For a few moments the two gentlemen glared with keen distaste, and even anger, at the inoffensive canoe; then they seated themselves at the side of the trail and lit a cigarette each.

"What a life!" sighed Slippery.

"You said it!" agreed Joe gloomily.

"I told you from the beginning that this skirt-business wasn't going to be no cinch," continued Slippery, "Here we been holed up in these backwoods for nearly a month; been running our feet off on this no good portage; been paddling that lousy canoe

gent
h thall me hands feel like emery-paper inside;
outinn' for what? That skirt is as far off now
n las when we first came. And we have to
ly keep on ducking and hiding in the bush like
ides two rabbits, so that they won't get a line
issuon us. Damn! A thousand smackers cer-
be tainly ain't too cheap."

no ci "True, true!" admitted Joe with a sor-
therowful shake of his head. "It sure is a
lthougther proposition than I bargained for!
nself But who would-o'-thought that this Hiram
thJ. Morgan fellow would surround himself
er o' with a bunch of guys as big as a Tammany
an Hall meeting? That guy ain't no sport bring-
neal a bunch like that along just to go for
An a picnic! And then there's that long-legged
ness guy, what seems to have frozen on to the
girl. Gosh! You would-o'-thought she
would have got tired of him by this time
and wanted to strike out on her lonesome
now an' then; but no such luck!"

"It seems to me, the only thing to do to
get at the skirt is to fix that guy's clock for
him," suggested Slippery thoughtfully.

"Aw, talk sense, Slippery!" rejoined Joe
with some asperity. "How are you going
to get him? Sneak up on him and bust him
one, grab the girl, and cheese it? And what
about them guns they's always toting
along? That guy don't look like no sleep-
walker, and if he sees us first, when we are
sneaking up to him—oh, mama! And even
if we manage to bust him one, what do you
think that girl would be doing while we
was doing the bustin'? Lemme tell you,
Slippery, that girl doesn't look as if she
would think twice about using that there
gun of hers. An' as for bumping off that
interferin', long-legged guy with our own
artillery—well, I tell you straight; I ain't
goin' to be mixed up in no killing; not for
only a thousand cart-wheels. No, sir! We
have to get that girl alone; an' God knows
when that'll be," he ended with a sigh.

"An' in the meantime we're stuck in this
hell of a place," broke in Slippery bitterly.
"No proper meals—not what I'll call a
square meal, anyhow; whisky nearly given
out; no decent sleep; and holed up in them
hills like rabbits! It sure is fierce. Not a
picture-show, or a saloon, or nothin' but
trees an' boids. Gosh, an' the base-ball sea-
son in full swing in li'l ol' Noo York! It
seems so long since I saw a ball game that I
can't hardly remember what it feels like to
heave a pop-bottle at an umpire." And an
expression of intense wistfulness crept over
his already cloudy features.

"Aw! Have a heart, Slippery, an' can all
that stuff!" pleaded Joe. The sunny optim-
ism with which he had started out on the
venture was by now a thing of the past.
"But sitting here won't buy baby a new
frock," he finished. "So let's pick up that
dam' ocean liner of ours, an' get a move
on!"

Arrived at Clear Water Lake they
launched their canoe, and commenced to
paddle down along the eastern shore, closely
hugging the shadows.

The surface of the lake was almost as
smooth as a sheet of glass. Only in some
few places was the placid water ruffled into
dark ripples from time to time, by occa-
sional puffs of gentle breeze. The eastern
shore was still in shadows, while the oppo-
site shore lay bathed in sunlight; the
spruces on the ridges standing out as if
they were sprinkled with gold dust.

Far up in the north end a loon sent out
her long-drawn-out, eerie calls for her mate,
while in a bay near at hand a flock of wild
ducks could be heard discussing the pros-
pects for the coming day.

The whole was a picture of serene peace
and beauty, a scene which ought to have
struck a chord in anybody, be his disposi-
tion ever so bitter, but sad to relate, it left
Joe and Slippery utterly and entirely cold!
I am afraid that their ideal of beautiful
scenery would have been the vista which
opens up when one pushes back the swing-
ing doors of a well set up bar-room; or
perhaps a base-ball park, with bases full,
and the bleachers representing a fair imi-
tation of Bedlam.

Anyhow, they propelled their canoe
along with the absolute minimum of exer-
tion which would give it a forward motion.
Their objective was a promontory sticking
out in the lake some two miles to the north
of Camp Morgan. From the highest point
of this promontory they had an excellent
view of all that was going on at the camp;
and they had, therefore, established their
base of operations there from the first day
that they had honored the camp with their
close surveillance.

Here they used to hide their canoe and
themselves in the brush; and one keep
watch on all the movements in the camp
from the highest point through a pair of
field-glasses, while the other slept, or took
his ease.

The sad fact has already been told, how-
ever, that in spite of their closest applica-

tion to duty, the result of their efforts had so far been, in the fullest sense of the idiom, a wash-out! And they had commenced seriously to voice the opinion that "Schinky had slipped something dirty acrost!"

On this morning as they crossed the mouth of a small bay, they suddenly stopped paddling, and sat gazing pop-eyed at the shore. Then Slippery, who was paddling bow, turned around and stared at Joe, and Joe stared back at Slippery, their faces expressing a happy mixture of awed amaze, incredulity and joy. Then, without a word, they both again turned their gaze towards the shore, half afraid that what their eyes had seen might prove to be a mirage. But their eyes reassured them. And what they actually beheld made Slippery see the road leading to that Mecca of the base-ball fan, the New York Polo Ground, stretched before him in straight, unbroken smoothness!

CHAPTER VIII

MORNING had arrived at Camp Morgan, and the inmates had commenced to bestir themselves.

Several of the half-breeds had set out in canoes to lift the fish-nets. The Morgans were all very fond of fresh trout and sturgeon for breakfast; and, as they did not want to rely implicitly on the individual talent of the various members of the party for their morning supply of fish, several nets were set each night.

In his cook-shack Ben Giddy was singing over his preparations for breakfast. His vocal chords proclaimed to all and sundry that he earnestly desired to be in "Dixie"; and those who happened to overhear his harmonious efforts as earnestly wished that his desire might be speedily fulfilled.

To him entered Marie.

"Hello, Fuzzy-Wuzzy!" was Ben's cheery greeting. "Up already? An' how are all the folks at home?"

"Good morning," was Marie's dignified and frigid answer. Ben was not a favorite. Apart from his inane allusions to her curly hair on all occasions, he also had an irksome habit of calling her "Irish." If he had called her "Frenchy," now . . . However, Marie had her duties to fulfil.

"Is the water hot, yes?" she inquired shortly.

"Hello! Got out of bed on the wrong

side again this mornin', Irish?" asked the unabashed Ben.

Marie disdained an answer.

In silence she proceeded to the cooking range. In further silence she tested the temperature of the water in the big boiler. In continued silence she commenced filling the cans with hot water.

Marie, her task finished, and carrying the hot-water cans in her hands, left the cook-shack with a sharp toss of her head and a withering glance at Ben.

Marie first proceeded to the tent occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Morgan. After a perfunctory knock on the canvas tent-flap—an entirely futile matter of form—she started calling the inhabitants by chanting: "Madame, Monsieur!" "Monsieur, Madame!" in a rising crescendo. After a while she was rewarded by hearing Hiram J.'s snores end in a kind of a death-rattle, and this was followed by the mystic query: "Whassit?"

"Hot water for madame and monsieur."

"A' right! Put it inside."

This duty successfully discharged, Marie proceeded to the tent occupied by Miss Morgan; where she went through the same ceremonial, only that her chant was now changed to "Mammeselle!"

Usually the ceremony here was shorter than that in front of the tent occupied by Morgan Mister and Missus; but on this morning Marie exerted herself to the point of breathlessness without arousing an answer.

Puzzled, she at last parted the tent-flaps and stuck her head inside, and to her surprise she found the tent empty.

Bewildered, she withdrew her head and looked searchingly around her; expecting to see the missing lady somewhere on the sky-line. But her eyes drew a blank.

She at once divulged her stupendous news—for Miss Morgan was famed for her hatred for early rising—to Mr. and Mrs. Morgan.

"What is that? Marion not in her tent?" inquired Hiram J., stifling a yawn. "Oh, well, she's around somewhere," he ended indifferently.

"Take a look around for her, Marie," said Mrs. Morgan with equal indifference.

Marie shouted around in the likely places where Miss Morgan might be found; but without success. In the course of her wanderings she ran into Jim Hayes, and asked

him if he had seen Miss Morgan anywhere.

"Gosh! Is that kid missin' again!" remarked Hayes, disgust in his voice. "I guess I'll have to tie a string to that young female to keep track of her. Has she gone on the lake?"

"How am I to know?" inquired Marie ungraciously and tartly, outraged at the free and easy terms Hayes employed when alluding to "Mammeselle."

"Sure, that's easy," grinned Hayes, who loved teasing Marie—or Mary as he would persist in calling her, in spite of her indignant corrections. "All you've got to do is either to open them sweet little blinkers of yours an' let them roam over the canoes, or else open that little rosebud of a mouth of yours an' ask one of the boys if her canoe is missin'. Simple, ain't it, when you know how?"

Marie bridled under these insults, and was about to give a sharp answer; but Hayes had turned away from her, and was shouting a query in Cree to one of the breeds. The breed shouted an answer in the same language, and Hayes turned to the girl again:

"Say, Mary, my dear. Your little lamb is on the lake all right. Her canoe is gone."

The outraged Marie left him without vouchsafing an answer, and went to report the result of her quest to Mr. and Mrs. Morgan.

"Well, well!" remarked Hiram J. with an indulgent smile to his wife as they continued to their tent to dress. "What do you think of that, mother? Fancy daughter getting up with the birds to get some morning exercise! She is certainly perking up. I'll bet she'll be back at breakfast-time good and hungry!"

But breakfast-time came, and no Miss Morgan. Her parents commenced to feel slightly uneasy, and Hiram J. sent for Jim Hayes.

"Look here, Jim," he said. "We are getting a bit worried about my daughter. She seems to have been away a long time. Do you know, by any chance, when she started out?"

"I couldn't say for sure; but it must have been considerably early, 'cause none of the boys saw her leave. I guess she must have slipped away before any of them was about, or else somebody would have been sure to spot her."

"What time do the boys get up, then?"

"Oh, somewheres between five an' half-past."

Hiram J. looked at his watch.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed with some alarm. "It is now nearly half-past eight. If you are right in your surmises, she must have been gone more than three hours. What on earth can have been keeping her all this time?"

"Well, this is how I figger," said Jim Hayes. "Early this morning I heard some shootin' across the lake. That would be Weston an' Angus tryin' for ducks. Now, Miss Morgan has probably spotted them an' joined them; and then, seein' it would be a long way back to camp, she's probably gone an' had breakfast at Weston's camp."

"Of course! That is probably what has happened," said Hiram J., relieved. "Anyhow, Jim I wish you would be kind enough to run over to Weston's camp and bring her home. Her mother is getting a bit anxious."

"Sure, I'll run over," answered Jim heartily. "I'll set out straight away; an' we'll be back in about half an hour or so. Don't you or Mrs. Morgan worry none. Your daughter can handle a canoe most as well as any old-timer by this time. An' it is a nice, calm day, so she's bound to be all right."

As Hayes turned away to depart he muttered to himself:

"Well, ain't these women an eternal source o' trouble, now?"

After Hayes had taken his departure, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan sat down to their breakfast in the living-tent, the canvas front of which had been rolled up to give the occupants an uninterrupted view towards the lake.

The meal was not a success. They each tried to impress on the other that of course there was no need to worry; and only succeeded in alarming each other the more.

AT LAST they saw two dots far out on the lake, which materialized into two canoes as they came nearer.

"Here they come, mother!" announced Hiram J. breezily; but his voice shook a little.

He walked over to where a pair of prismatic glasses were hanging on a peg on one of the tent-poles; and, taking the glasses out of the case, he raised them to his eyes. He studied the canoes steadily for a while;

then he lowered the glasses, polished the lenses with his pocket handkerchief, and again focused them on the rapidly traveling canoes.

"Do you see her?" anxiously inquired Mrs. Morgan.

"I can't get these glasses focused properly," answered her husband in a voice which he tried to make casual. "There is such a glare from the lake; so everything gets blurred. But let us walk down to the jetty and receive them."

They went down to the bay. But in spite of the cheerful front which Hiram J. exhibited for his wife's benefit, his heart was heavy. For the glasses had functioned exceedingly well, and to his consternation he had discovered that the occupants of the canoes were respectively Hayes in the one and Weston and Angus in the other.

At last the canoes rounded the point in the bay, and approached the landing.

Mrs. Morgan's eyes opened wide, and she clutched her husband's arm.

"She is not with them," she whispered in a tremulous voice.

"Keep cool, mother," encouraged Mr. Morgan, patting the trembling hand which was clutching his coat-sleeve; and making a strong effort to keep the tremor out of his own voice. "It doesn't follow that anything is wrong because she wasn't over at the sergeant's camp. That was only a suggestion. We'll wait and hear what Weston and Hayes have to say."

But Mrs. Morgan did not answer. She studied the approaching canoes with something akin to terror in her eyes.

At last the canoes scraped alongside the jetty, and the sergeant greeted the Morgans with breezy cheerfulness which he was far from feeling.

"Good morning, Mrs. Morgan! Good morning, Mr. Morgan! I hear Miss Morgan is playing truant. Has she returned yet?"

Mr. and Mrs. Morgan merely shook their heads in dumb misery.

"Well, there is really not the slightest cause for worry. Miss Morgan is extremely capable in handling a canoe, and the lake has been like a duck-pond all the morning," continued the sergeant reassuringly.

"But accidents will happen," interpolated Mr. Morgan lugubriously.

"Not on a day like this. And besides . . ." But here the sergeant abruptly

checked himself. He was going to point out to them that Miss Morgan was an excellent swimmer; but as the statement might indicate that he did not consider an accident outside the realm of probability, he desisted. "Besides," he continued on another tack, "Miss Morgan was up early this morning that it is more than likely that she has fallen asleep somewhere while resting. And her canoe may have gone adrift and left her marooned somewhere; perhaps on one of the islands. Any thing like that could have happened, but there is not the slightest cause for alarm. Anyhow, we'll organize a search-party at once; and we shall soon have your daughter back— hale and sound," he ended with an encouraging smile.

After a short conference between Weston and Hayes, one canoe was dispatched across to the western shore with orders to search every bay carefully; another was sent to examine all the islands; Jim Hayes was going to search the south end of the lake; and Weston and Angus took the eastern shore. The canoes of the search parties rapidly left the bay, and paddled out on the lake, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Morgan in a slightly more optimistic mood, as Weston's assurances had impressed them not a little.

But it was fortunate for their peace of mind that they had not overheard Weston's parting injunctions to Jim Hayes.

"Look here, Jim," he had said gravely, "You had better scout down as far as below the rapids. You can never tell. Miss Morgan may have imagined herself such an accomplished canoeist by now that she might have thought it about time for her to try issue with the Gulch."

"You said it, Wess! The same thought occurred to me," Hayes had answered. "You never can guess what the hell that young woman may be up to."

Weston and Angus pushed rapidly northward, following the shore closely, and entering every bay, while their eyes were dodging keenly around everywhere.

It was Angus's sharp eyes which first discovered a dark something floating out on the lake. As they rapidly paddled towards the object they soon discovered it to be the bottom of an overturned canoe. They had no optimistic delusions about the ownership of the canoe, and a closer look proved their surmises correct. The derelict was without

shadow of a doubt Miss Morgan's canoe. When they got alongside they quickly entered it, and sat for a few moments, staring in silence into the empty, water-logged bilge.

After a while Weston, his face very pale, lifted his head, and with his eyes he measured the distance to the nearest wharf on the shore. The distance was not very long for a good swimmer like Miss Morgan. Probably she was somewhere in any woods, walking back to camp. Perched, she was near enough for a hail to alarm her.

"Hoh, Miss Morgan!" he shouted at the top of his voice. Several times he shouted; but only the mocking echo of his own voice floated back to them from the woods, followed by a chilling silence.

"Perhaps she is so far on her way that she can't hear. She might even be back at camp by now," he remarked hopefully to himself.

But Angus merely shook his head. He was a keen observer, and had noticed several things.

"I do not think so," he answered in Cree. "The bottom of the canoe is very dry. She must have been floating like this for many hours, so the girl would have had plenty of time to reach camp before we left, if she had been walking back."

And Weston had to admit the force of the argument. The conviction began to grow on him that they were facing grim, stark tragedy. That Miss Morgan, who by now had proved herself quite proficient in handling a canoe, should have had an upset—and especially on a calm morning like this—he found utterly inexplicable. But there was the capsized canoe to prove it. A moment's thoughtless recklessness, or carelessness perhaps—and when she struck the water a possible touch of cramp, and . . .

This further mental reconstruction of the tragedy—the hopeless, agonizing struggle in the water, the inevitable end—struck a chill to his heart, and his face grew strained. He had been face to face with many tragedies in the past; but they had mostly always been impersonal affairs, mere "cases." But this was different; and he grew more and more horrified as his brain gradually commenced to grasp the entire situation in all its grim details.

Worst of all, perhaps, was the thought that soon he would have to apprise of his find and its obvious significance the par-

ents who were waiting optimistically back at the camp for their daughter's safe and speedy return. And what the shock would mean to them he dared hardly contemplate. His heart grew heavy within him as he thought of the hideous task before him, and he sat staring down into the water-logged craft alongside, his grim thoughts rioting in his mind.

Suddenly Angus's voice broke in on his meditations.

"What is that, Angus?" he inquired a little dully.

But Angus did not repeat his former remark. Instead he merely pointed down the lake, in the direction from which they had come.

Weston's eyes followed Angus's pointed direction, and they discovered a canoe heading towards them. The frequent flashes of the paddles indicated that they were being swung recklessly from side to side, and that the canoe was travelling at top speed.

"I wonder if . . ." commenced the sergeant; but broke off, as if afraid of putting into words the optimistic thought which had come to him. So in silence he and Angus watched the rapidly approaching canoe.

As it came within hailing distance one of the two half-breeds who occupied it began shouting, showing signs of great excitement almost indecent in one of his phlegmatic and indolent temperament:

"Hey! Sergeant! You come straight back to camp! Boss wants you!"

"Has Miss Morgan returned?" bellowed Weston in return.

"Me not know," answered the breed. The canoes were now within speaking distance, and the conversation could be carried out in a more normal key. "Him boss up on hill. Suddenly we hear great shout. We look. Boss is running down hill wavin' paper in him han', an' shoutin' fit to bust: 'Hey! hey! Fin' sergeant at once, quick!' An' we go off. He also sen' somebody fetch Jim Hayes."

"But what is it all about?" cried Weston impatiently.

"Him boss talk so fast, me not understand' all; but hear him shout: 'Kidnap! Kidnap!' several times. . . ." But here he was rudely interrupted by the sergeant.

"No time for more pow-wow!" he shouted. "I'll look into this at once. You two bring this canoe back to camp. Speed

her up, Angus! We have to beat all records back."

And they were off in a cloud of spray.

CHAPTER IX

DURING half of the preceding night Miss Morgan had been severely worried, annoyed and incommoded by a swarm of mosquitoes, which in some inexplicable manner had managed to get inside her mosquito-net; and an intense warfare had been the result.

Several times she had decided that at last she had succeeded in routing the enemy, and she had snuggled down on her pillow again. But on each occasion she had come to the sad conclusion that she had underrated considerably the energy and perseverance of the attacking forces. Every time her eyes had closed, and she was on the point of sliding into dreamland, a chorus of "bizzzz-zizzzz-zizzzz's" in various keys had warned her that another attack was being launched by the foe; and the fight started all over again.

At last she decided that the time had come for decisive measures! She sprang out on the tent-floor, and commenced a systematic and bloody campaign against the invaders. After some fifteen minutes of fierce fighting, no quarter being asked for nor any expected, Miss Morgan at last decided that the foe was successfully accounted for to the last man!

She prepared to crawl into her bed again; but made the surprising discovery that she was so wide awake that the prospect of further sleep did not appeal to her. She looked at her watch. Half-past four.

She walked over to the tent-flap and stuck her head out. It was a glorious morning. She inhaled deeply the cool, fresh air with its tang of resin, while she admired the calm scene which spread out before her. The smooth, calm lake seemed to smile and wink at her, as if inviting her to come out and play; an invitation which she decided to accept after some moments of thought.

Quickly she dressed herself; and, stepping out of the tent, she quietly made her way to her canoe, her feet making a dark swath in the grey net of dew which covered the grass.

Having launched her canoe she paddled slowly out of the bay; and out on the lake she followed the eastern shore northwards.

The canoe seemed to glide smoothly, almost without exertion on her part, through glassy water; and she watched idly ripples, which her canoe stirred up, themselves far out on the lake.

For some miles she paddled along, but at last she decided to have a few minutes' rest before she started on her return trip. She turned her canoe into a small bay, ran up on the smooth shore, climbed out, and stretched herself on the dry, white sand a bit farther up the beach.

How refreshing is this early morning air, she reflected idly. Of course, she had frequently made acquaintance with this early morning air in the past; but that had generally been on occasions when she was homeward bound from some function or dance; when her eyes were heavy; her feet tingling; and when the echo of dance-music still buzzed around in her head.

At this point she was interrupted by a splashing sound out on the bay. She lifted her head, and discovered a canoe with two men heading towards her. At first she thought it might be the sergeant and Angus, or some of the men from the camp; but the way the occupants handled their paddles excluded these possibilities. Sergeant Weston had taught her the Indian style of paddling, with the smooth, graceful overhead swing from side to side; and she had speedily recognized inexperience in the way the two paddles in the approaching canoe were being hacked jerkily into the water. She sat up to study the newcomers more closely; and as the canoe drew nearer she saw that the occupants were white men, and total strangers to her. As a matter of fact the strangers were none other than the two members of the Kidnapping Syndicate, Joe and Slippery. It was Miss Morgan, lying on the smooth sand in the bay, whom they had discovered as they crossed the mouth of the lake, and it was that vision which had stirred them so strongly.

At last the canoe grated against the beach, and the two men got out. Miss Morgan decided on the spot that she did not like their looks.

Neither Joe nor Slippery was originally cut out for prize-winner in a beauty competition; and their sojourn in the free and easy North had neither improved nor glossed over the fundamental defects which nature had inflicted on them.

They did not look as if they felt particularly at ease in the woodsman's gar-

ly effected. Especially did their awkward
rough when they happened to step on a
idly he or pebble proclaim that moccasins
up, e not their normal or favorite footgear.
long, en to Miss Morgan's not particularly
utes, ctised eye they looked entirely and ut-
rip. ly out of the picture; and she wondered
y, ra. o they were and what they were doing

When they got up to where the girl was
l sitting on the sand, Slippery, who was
the lead, removed his hat with a flourish,
ich he fondly hoped would stamp him as
"gent-o'-the-world."

"Good morning, miss," he addressed her
easantly, with what he intended to be an
gratiating smile; but which Miss Morgan
dged a particularly nasty leer.

"How do you do," she answered coldly.

"Say, miss, we've been looking for you
me time," continued Slippery after a short
ause.

"Indeed? And now, when you have
ound me, what can I do for you?" she in-
quired still more frigidly, staring Slippery
and down.

Slippery shuffled his feet uneasily under
er scrutiny, and his eyes dropped to the
ound. He felt embarrassed, and won-
dered how to diplomatically state their
rrand. Skirts always affected him that
ay! But Joe was made of sterner stuff.

"I'll tell you straight, without no frills,
what you can do, miss!" he spoke up.
You can just step right into that there
ance, which we have just vacated, an'
ome right along with us to our camp. Dat's
what you can do!"

"Along to your camp?" repeated the
girl, puzzled. "And why, please?"

"Because I say so!" answered Joe tersely.
He was in a hurry lest somebody should
turn up and spoil their game, and, conse-
quently, somewhat short-tempered.

"In spite of your abominably rude
answer, I still fail to see why I should visit
your camp!" retorted Miss Morgan with
some heat.

Joe was about to give a sharp answer;
but Slippery got in ahead of him.

"Say, I'll explain, miss," he said in a
tone which he tried to make propitiatory.
"Your dad can't see his way to do a certain
thing, and so we's intending to use a bit
of gentle third degree persuasion; meaning,
keeping you as our guest for a bit, till your
dad sees daylight. See?"

"In other words, you intend to kidnap

me and hold me for ransom or something?"

"Hit it first shot, miss!" broke in Joe
dryly. "But as this ain't a Methodist meet-
ing, we'll turn the tap off on all sociable
stuff, and get a move on! Come on, miss!"

"And if I refuse to come with you?"

"Well, then, we'll have to tie you up and
lug you along anyhow. An' lemme tell you
something more. If you start any shouting
or other shennanigans we'll tie you up an'
gag you too! See? So what's it going to
be? Are you coming along, or must we lug
you along like a turkey trussed up for
Thanksgiving?"

"Oh, I will come along peacefully. Do
you think for a moment that I would ex-
pose myself to the indignity of being con-
taminated by having your dirty paws touch
me?" she flashed back at him with spirit.
Whatever her faults, cowardice was not
one of them.

Joe's features took on a deeper hue; and
Slippery, who had listened in silent admira-
tion to Joe's masterful and forceful handling
of the situation, looked down at the sand
and started scratching around with the toe
of one moccasined foot. Unfortunately he
managed to come in contact with a sharp
flint, and he abruptly ceased his excavations
with a smothered curse.

The Syndicate were not an oversuscepti-
ble couple, and the word "contaminate"
was an alien to them; but they had caught
enough of the drift of the girl's remarks to
recognize them for what they were: a nasty
crack!

"Well, time we was moving along," Joe
announced. "So shake a leg, miss—if you
please!"

While Miss Morgan scrambled to her
feet, refusing all offers of assistance, Slip-
pery did some deep and rapid thinking.
Their captive did not appear like one of
"them helpless, dependent kind of fe-
males"; but seemed almost aggressively
capable of standing up for herself. And
with this realization the first joys of ac-
tually having secured their prey began to
evaporate in Slippery; and his persistent
pessimistic conviction anent the "hoodoo"
hovering over any enterprise in which a
skirt was involved once more came to the
fore. And this caused him to visualize some
possible failure in the future with an at-
tendant day of reckoning; and he decided
that a conciliatory and friendly attitude to-
wards the girl might help to ease his lot,
should Nemesis overtake them. He, there-

fore, turned to the girl, and said in his most ingratiating voice:

"Look here, miss. Don't you worry over this picnic! We have got a swell camp with a dandy an' elegant tent fixed up for you. We ain't, of course, in your class; but we's both gents, an' don't intend to hurt you. So you needn't be afraid. See?"

"Afraid?" repeated Miss Morgan in a voice so surcharged with scorn and contempt as to make the Syndicate squirm. "Afraid of a couple of cowardly ruffians, who have to come two strong to capture one lone girl? Don't make me laugh!"

The Syndicate let that one go by; although Slippery mumbled to himself something about it being "fierce to be handed the frozen mitt, when a guy is aiming to do the right thing!"

In silence the party repaired to the canoes, and took their places in the one belonging to the Syndicate. Joe took the stern, Miss Morgan occupied the middle, and Slippery the bow. They placed Miss Morgan's paddle in her canoe, and took the latter in tow.

When they were well out on the lake clear of the bay, Joe hauled the trailing canoe alongside and deliberately capsized it.

"When they find that thing floating bottom up, it'll give them something to think of!" he declared with satisfaction.

"Do you realize that my people will think I am drowned if they find my canoe floating around like that?" inquired Miss Morgan with the first sign of distress she had shown since her meeting with her escort.

"Sure, miss!" answered Joe cheerfully. He felt a certain satisfaction at seeing her squirm, for her earlier sallies against him still rankled. "That's the main idea. See? They'll be so doggone busy hunting for your corpse that they won't have no time snooping around and perhaps catch up with us before we get you safe to camp. When we first get there, we'll sure be so hard to find that they'll be welcome to know we've got you!"

"You cowardly, callous ruffians!" exploded Miss Morgan, nearly upsetting the canoe in her emotion. "Do you really mean to tell me that you are so utterly low and heartless that you deliberately intend to expose my parents to the shock of believing me drowned?"

"Aw, look now, miss! It won't be for

long," Slippery—still with one wary eye on that possible Nemesis—tried to placate her. "As soon as we reach camp, we're going to send a letter to your dad saying how you are safe and thriving, see?"

Miss Morgan constrained herself to dignified silence. She realized that it not really serve any purpose to try to appeal to the chivalrous instincts of the rascals. They simply had none. And was already half sorry that she had let herself be provoked to her previous outburst. But Joe kept the ball of conversation rolling.

"Say!" he cried. "Nix on all that dawdling! We can do all our talking in camp! An' lemme tell you something, miss! Don't you start trying to upset this here canoe again, or we'll sure truss you up good an' proper! I'll just put you in that both me an' my pal can both swear so you can't get rid of us by that kind of shennanigans. Now I've warned you!"

As Miss Morgan maintained an absolute silence, Messrs. Joe and Slippery again applied themselves to the paddles, and the canoe glided along towards the portage at the camp in a morning which had lost its glamour to at least one of the party.

They arrived at the camp without any incidents; but the trip had not been marked by any particular cheer and merry comradeship. Miss Morgan had, throughout, maintained an attitude of lofty disdain, and had determinedly ignored and repulsed Slippery's attempts at establishing more friendly relations. And this had in a measure distressed Slippery. He had summed up the situation in a muttered aside to Joe as follows:

"She's treating us more like a couple of skunks with the rabies than as a couple of gents!" Which allegory Joe had received with a contemptuous snort.

WHEN the two members of the Syndicate had at last dropped their respective canoes in the basin—they invariably kept their two canoes up there—with a relieved sigh and a last vindictive glance at that stout and inoffensive craft, Slippery approached Miss Morgan in his best manner.

"Say, Miss," he said with friendly deference. "Come along with me, an' I'll show you your tent."

In silence she followed him; and when he had unlaced the flaps of the tent she

ed her head inside and glanced around. Her furnishings were not bad, though not so good on the side of luxury. At least not according to her standards. There was a carpet with blankets and sheets; an upholstered packing-case with an enamelled wash-basin and water jug; a mirror; a deck chair; and even a strip of matting on the floor. Having finished the cursory inspection of her future quarters she withdrew her head and turned to Slippery, who at once expressed her ingratiatingly, a shade of pride in his voice:

"Not bad quarters them, eh, miss?"
 "How long are you intending to keep me here?" she queried uncompromisingly.
 "That depends," answered Slippery a little shortly; the girl's attitude had commenced to pique him a bit. But by now Joe had joined them, and he promptly grasped the reins of conversation.
 "You'll stay here till we hear from our employer that you can go. See?" he remarked.

"And how long will that be?"
 "Well, now, that depends on circumstances," answered Joe reflectively. "We're sending a message to your ol' man straight away; and the rest is up to him. If he acts promptly, according to schedule, it'll only be for a month or so, I'll say."
 "A month?" gasped Miss Morgan with a note of dismay pleasing to Joe's ears. He was a man of vindictive temperament. But you can't expect me to stay up here for all that time without any clothes!" continued the girl. "I have only got what I'm standing up in. Have you thought of that?"

"We sure have, miss," spoke up Slippery with great complacency. His hour of triumph had arrived, and he was about to play his trump card. "We are gents what know what frills an' things a lady is needful of." He went over and opened the tent flap, and, with a triumphant smile, he pointed to a box, standing up against the tent wall. "See that box, miss? You just have a li'l peep inside that, an' you'll find all you want. There's everything in there what you'll need, even to tooth-brush an' tooth-paste. Me an' Joe here took a lot of trouble and thought over that outfit, believe me! But you'll find everything O. K.," he ended with satisfied conviction. But Slippery's sunny smile found no reflection

on the girl's stern features. Without a word she brushed past him and entered the tent.

Slippery dropped the flap behind her and walked over to Joe, to whom he remarked with a complacent smirk:

"Say, Joe. Won't she open them pretty lamps of hers wide when she has a squint at what's inside of that box. Oh, boy! That'll teach her that we's gents of the world, an' not common rough-necks!"

"I don't give one hoot in hell for what she thinks!" answered Joe sourly and unfeelingly.

At that moment Miss Morgan reappeared, and Slippery immediately observed, with a sinking feeling, that all was far from well. She confronted the two with flashing eyes, a red spot burning on each cheek; and even the most casual observer could hardly have failed to notice that she was in a towering rage. She thrust forward her hands, in each of which she carried an article of feminine wearing apparel which she, in a saner mood, would hardly have exhibited quite so publicly.

"Are these the things you expect me to wear?" she asked with forced, but ominous calm.

"What's the matter with them?" asked Slippery unhappily, realizing that his trump card had gone astray, somehow, and had failed to win the trick.

"What is the matter? What is the matter?" mimicked their prisoner. "Do you mean that you seriously expect me to wear things which I should have felt ashamed to send to an orphanage?"

"Aw, come now, miss," pleaded Slippery. "Them things can't be as bad as all that. Say, them is the best things me and Joe could scare up in that one-horse burg, an' . . ."

But here Joe cut in:

"Stow it, Slippery! Stow it!" he directed impatiently. "If she don't like the stuff, she can do the other thing! This ain't no ladies' outfitting shop where she can pick and choose as she likes!"

But here the slender strand, which had kept Miss Morgan's fury in leash, snapped; and she gave her rage a free rein:

"You unspeakable swine!" she flung at Joe; and so forcefully that even that hardened individual swayed slightly before the storm. "How dare you speak to me like that! Persons like you are too vile and low to be allowed to live on this earth!

Words fail me, when it comes to describing the thing you are, you—you dog, you pig!” She abruptly turned on her heel and strode furiously into the tent.

The Syndicate, jointly, glared at the innocent tent for a few seconds in outraged silence; and they turned around and started strolling down to the brook.

“Gosh, she is sure some spit-fire,” muttered Joe after they had walked for some moments in reflective silence.

“You sure got yours, I’ll tell the world!” remarked Slippery with ill-concealed mal-evolent satisfaction.

“I’ll tame her yet, see if I don’t!” growled Joe ferociously. “I’ll teach that female manners, an’ don’t you forget it!”

“An’ how are you going to set about it?” asked Slippery with frank curiosity.

“I’ll manhandle her till she sees daylight, dat’s what I’m gonna do!” threatened Joe truculently.

“Say, Joe. You had better get a spanner for that wheel-box of yours. There’s a nut loose!” was Slippery’s friendly advice.

“What-cha-mean?”

“Aw, use them head-fillings of yours, Joe! You member what Schinky told us about treating her”—Slippery jerked his head somewhat viciously towards the tent which was sheltering Miss Morgan—“like a lady, don’t you?”

“But Schinky ain’t here, is he? An’ how the hell is he going to get wise to what I do to her?”

“Say, Joe. What you want is a whole tool-box, an’ not only a spanner!” said Slippery dogmatically. “Lemme tell you something. If you start any rough-stuff around that girl, old Hiram J. Morgan will raise such a holler when he gets back to Noo York, an’ set such a lot o’ guys busy trying to find out things, that Schinky won’t feel happy. An’ that won’t please him, believe me!”

“To hell with Schinky! I ain’t afraid of him!” cried Joe valiantly.

“Atta boy! Go to it!” encouraged Slippery jeeringly. “Of course it ain’t nothing in your young life if Schinky gets sore an’ goes to the District Attorney and tells him a few things about you; of course not! You’ll like to be given the welcoming mitt by your ol’ pals the wardens at Sing-Sing again, when you go there for a long, cozy stay. Won’t you? Talk sense, Joe!” ended Slippery in a less flippant vein. “You can’t

afford to buck ol’ Schinky; an’ you

“That’s so, Slippery!” said Joe up-tiltily, after some silent reflections. “Ain’t it fierce, being treated like a coo not a bit of a skirt! Gosh! This job is all of the thousand smackers; an’ con some!”

“You said it! But what did I wise up to in Schinky’s office that day? D’The I say that mixing up with a skirt wise going to be no cinch? Answer me th Joe demanded Slippery with not a little placency at seeing his predictions fall according to schedule.

“You sure did; and I was a mutt noazel listen and be warned,” moaned Joe bitterly. “Anyhow,” he continued a little more fully, “it sure can’t be for long. We’ll one of them Injuns of ours off with the ter for Hiram J., curse him, straight off bat, an’ get some quick action!”

BUT this was evidently not going to prove the Syndicate’s lucky day—in spite of its auspicious beginning.

They found their retainers cooking breakfast; but a close observer would have discovered something in their attitude which would indicate that the two had gone to a committee and that serious and weighty problems were on the program.

“Say!” commenced Joe without preamble, when they got to where the two were sitting. “One of you guys take a letter,” here he produced the sealed bulky envelope which had been handed him by Schinkelstein, “and sneak it into the camp of them Yankees over at the lake. But do it so that no one gets wise to where it comes from. You get me? Who’s going?”

If Joe had expected that the two were going to fall over each other in the scramble to secure the honor of being messenger, he was doomed to disappointment. The two, Moiese and Bernard, rose slowly to their feet and faced their employers.

“Him white woman, him stay here?” inquired Moiese, pointing to Miss Morgan’s tent.

“What the hell has that got to do with you?” elegantly asked Joe. “You’s paid to do what you are told, an’ not ask damn fool questions! Sabbe?”

“Him going to stay?” persisted Moiese

you moved, while Bernard gazed unwaveringly at Joe and Slippery.

For a while Joe looked like a volcano contemplating eruption; but evidently he did not think this the right moment for reaching forth brimstone and sulphur, for he confined himself to growling ungraciously:

"She sure is!"

"Then me an' Bernard quit!" was Moiese's startling answer.

Joe and Slippery were utterly taken back at hearing this bald and unexpected announcement, and, for a few minutes, all they could do was to stare in pop-eyed amazement at their two retainers. Slippery was the first to regain the use of his vocal chords.

"Say! What the hell is bitin' you two?" he cried, his voice nearly reaching the note of ebullience in his excitement. "Ain't you bein' paid to sit in with us? So what-cha-mean by this stuff about clearin' out?"

"Me an' Bernard not know you goin' dayid—kid—" Moiese groped for the word, "kid-steel him white woman, or me an' Bernard not come. You bet you! God damn no! You take white woman; bye-an' bye sergeant come; sergeant take us; an' we go Stony Mountain." (The Manitoba penitentiary.) "Me an' Bernard not like Stony Mountain; so me an' Bernard go. Joe!"

"What the hell's you gassin' about! Who's this sergeant guy you's talking about, anyhow?" inquired Joe, re-entering the lists.

"Him sergeant of police. Him down at lake. Him one devil. Me an' Bernard go before him come!"

"Gosh, is that all your trouble?" remarked Slippery, relieved. "Say, Joe, that must be that long-legged string-bean we saw legging around with the girl. Say, listen now," he addressed the two breeds in a paternal voice. "No sergeant is going to catch up with us. How can he? He can't follow our tracks on the water, can he? An' nobody has seen us, or know we's here, do they? An' even if he should happen to smell us out, well, I guess he ain't the first cop we have slipped it across; an' don't you forget it!"

But the two breeds were not convinced. "You not know sergeant," persisted Moiese. "He find you, you bet you. Me an' Bernard not stay. Too much risk!"

The sulphur and brimstone in Joe at last bubbled over.

"You two dirty double-crossers!" he stormed. "You'll damn well stay, or I'll break every damn bone in your bodies! So now you know!" And he glared truculently at the two offenders. But the latter did not quail before his outburst. Instead a ghost of a smile flitted over each face, and Bernard rendered the first contribution to the conversation.

"You try!" he remarked quietly.

But even in this crisis Joe's innate prudence and aversion to direct action conquered his rage. He had seen Bernard and Moiese pack their outfit across the portages; had seen them handle without effort loads which he, Joe, would have lifted with about the same ease as he would the Rocky Mountains; and he further knew that not alone were the two strong and wiry, but also as nimble as monkeys. In short: Joe realized that he had made a wrong lead; but also that he had to save his face.

"Say, this ain't the time for no ructions," he said with an attempt at quiet dignity. "We have to talk this over as gents! Ain't that so, Slippery?"

"We sure have," answered Slippery lugubriously, mentally consigning Schinky, Injuns, cops and skirts to the nether region. "You two wait here a minute, while me an' Joe talk over this mess."

He dragged Joe out of earshot of the two breeds; and after a fairly lengthy discussion—Slippery pleading, and Joe evidently unwilling to yield to his persuasions—they at last seemed to have come to some kind of an understanding. They returned to where Moiese and Bernard were waiting, and Slippery addressed them briskly, his face radiating benevolence and good-will.

"Listen here. If you two guys get twenty dollars more a month, bringing your pay up to a round hundred, will you stay?"

Not the slightest trace of enthusiasm or gratification could the disgusted Slippery detect on the two immovable faces of the breeds at this handsome offer.

"Me an' Bernard go talk it over," announced Moiese after a somewhat uncomfortable pause; and Slippery again took heart. Moiese and Bernard retired a few paces and started an earnest conversation in Cree. To their astonishment Joe and Slippery saw them point upwards several times; and instinctively they tilted their

chins towards the sky, and, completely at sea, they scanned the empty ether.

"Say! What the hell they pointing to heaven for?" inquired Slippery uneasily; after they had brought their faces back to earth once more. "Do you reckon they are getting religious or something?" But Joe could advance no theory as to the meaning of the mystic rite.

As a matter of fact, the two cautious breeds were merely discussing the probability of the camp having been spotted through the medium of the haze caused by the heat from the fire. They agreed that neither from Clear Water Lake nor even from Grassy Hill River was the haze discernible against the sky; but, of course, there was a possibility that somebody with sharp eyes, from one of the higher ridges in the Grassy Hills, might be able to discover the tell-tale, faint evidence of an existent fire in that locality. There was of course that risk; but in case they were caught, they would jointly protest and swear that they had absolutely no previous knowledge of, nor any hand in, the outrage which had taken place; and, furthermore, that after the kidnapping had taken place, they had been virtually kept prisoners to prevent them from raising an alarm. This, they agreed unanimously, would be a strong and effective line of defence. They had both had considerable experience of court proceedings in the past, and understood and appreciated the value of having evidence cut and dried beforehand!

AFTER some further discussion they eventually decided on their course of action, and, closing the meeting, they returned to their employers.

"Me an' Bernard stay if you pay hundred-fifty dollars month," announced Moiese as spokesman.

"Say! Are you two outa your heads?" almost squealed Slippery; while Joe glared furiously at the two, on the verge of another eruption. "Of all the double-crossing, blackmailing guys I ever saw, you two take the cake! Ain't you got no shame?" Slippery was getting virtuous in his excitement. "Ain't you got no decency, going back on your partners like this? Gosh! What do you think we are? Wall Street millionaires? Aw, come down to earth an' talk sense!"

But Slippery's impassioned pleading and appeals to the softer and better part of their nature stirred no chord in the breeds.

"Hundred-fifty dollars, or we go repeated Moiese, unmoved.

"God'll-mighty! If you ain't then!" "facedest bunch of robbers I ever call r my lamps on!" continued Slippery. ts li you two guys's having a soft snapple nothin', an' we offer you a hundred to do it. An' on top of all that yshed ahead an' try to sand-bag another Atta smackers out of us! Say! Talk sen tell hundred it is!" y, b

But the pleading pathos of Slip gl voice was lost on the two hardened hdsca

"Hundred-fifty month!" chanted Mhe g and Bernard nodded his head in ro ment.

"You two guys won't get a cent ey ro hundred! That's flat! So take it or min it!" shouted Joe, his right hand itch Thei produce the neat automatic which ag snugly nestling in his left armpit, an troduce that into the argument. But b No enough common sense left to perceive ov such a course must remain a fond an I dream only. If he shot the two breeds!" and Slippery would be as much up the This as ever; and, besides, there would be sr prospect of facing a charge of murder ain time in the future. So he kept his ang under control.

"All right! We go!" announced M

But Slippery shouted excitedly: d a

"Wait a minute!" And, grabbing Jg a edin the arm, he led him aside.

"Have a heart, Joe!" he commenced mournful voice, as soon as they were of earshot of their mutinous retad "Them guys has got us by the short h on ut You know, we can't afford to let them red Who's going to cook our grub, an' pa and them damned canoes back to Portage B "T an' carry all our stuff across them port "V if we let 'em go? We can't do it, an quir for one ain't even going to try. It w "T bust up the whole proposition if they ern They might even tell that we have " the damned skirt; an' then where'd we he Let's give 'em their one-fifty. It's Schin "eay funeral, anyhow, so we won't lose not rd " It's a go, ain't it?" v

"Say, Schinky may start some kid at our expense bill, if I ain't much tri taken," said Joe in a doubtful voice. he

"Let him kick. He would kick at an pense of one cent, anyhow, so where's " have to give them two injuns the dough cr ou

"t the show! We can't afford to lose 't them!"

"All right, then!" grumbled Joe. "But it's like hell to give in to a pair of snapple-crossers like them. But we may be addressed to slip something across them yet," he that shed hopefully.

"Atta boy! We sure'll try hard, an' you k sen tell the world I said so!" agreed Slippery, brightening. "Well, let's go an' slip Slip glad news to them two blots on the ned hdscape!"

The glad news was promptly slipped; but in two recipients did not bubble over with sterous gratification and enthusiasm. ent they received it without comment and with it orming indifference.

itch Their differences being at last settled, which again produced the letter from Hiram it, an

But "Now, who of you guys is going to take ceives over to the camp of them Yanks?"

and an "I go," said Bernard, "for twenty dol-breets!"

the This bald-faced announcement caused ld be smoldering embers of the late war to rderain break out in full flame. Renewed his angling! Joe was raving and threaten-g, going well on all six cylinders with d Mottle wide open; Slippery was cajoling, : d appealing; the breeds were maintain-g a silent, stoical indifference to the pro-edings. Result: unconditional surrender the part of the Syndicate.

"Here you are," growled Joe, scowling, and holding the letter towards Bernard as on as the peace terms had been ratified. ut Bernard did not at once take the prof-red envelope. Instead he held out his and and said simply:

"Twenty dollars."

"What-cha-mean, twenty dollars?" in-quired Joe.

"I want twenty dollars now," explained ernard.

"That's all right, I'll give 'em to you hen you get back!" said Joe, breathing eavily, his scowl deepening.

"Me want money now!" persisted Bern-rd.

With a comprehensive and exhaustive tring of oaths and cusswords, Joe produced he cash, and placed it in Bernard's hos-itable fist.

"Gosh! If them guys ain't the dandiest y. air of low-down hold-up men I ever ran gh across! Not even trusting a coupla gents; out squeezing the pay out beforehand, as

if we was a coupla crooks!" was Slippery's virtuous comment on the painful incident, as they watched Bernard take his departure.

The day dragged along. All nature was smiling; but found no sparkling reflection in the two members of the Kidnapping Syndicate. They were wrapped in a shroud of gloom so dense that no sunbeam could hope to penetrate or dispel it.

Bernard returned in due course, and reported success; but even this pleasing piece of information did not succeed in reviving the drooping spirits of Joe and Slippery.

Taken all around, it was a rotten day! Any they almost shuddered at the thought of having to face about one month of this kind of life. And there rose in the heart of each the fervent prayer that Hiram J. would show some quick action; thus curtailing their agony!

CHAPTER X

AS soon as the canoes, which were to search for Miss Morgan, had departed, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan had climbed the hill up to the summer-house, from where they would have a fairly extensive view over the lake. They had not noticed a face which had been peering at them from between some bushes at the crest of the hill, and which had been suddenly withdrawn as they started up the slope.

Up in the summer-house they seated themselves side by side and watched the lake. Far out they could still discern two dots which marked the canoes, which were to search the opposite shore and the islands; but apart from them the lake was empty. The sergeant's and Hayes' canoes were screened by the trees on the near shore. The lake, glittering in the bright sunshine, seemed so placid and friendly that it seemed utterly incongruous to connect tragedy with that smiling scene. And yet, back in the heads of the two simmered a dull something, which they did not dare analyze even to themselves.

So intent were they on watching the lake, that a slight rustling in the brush behind the arbour completely escaped their notice. They started up as if stung when they heard a slight thud right behind them, and simultaneously a voice shouting the one word: "Letter!"

They both spun around quickly and dis-

covered to their amazement a somewhat bulky envelope lying on the floor, and, further, through the trellis work, the back of a man fast disappearing into the brush.

For a few moments they stood watching the envelope with tense interest, as if it might be a merrily ticking bomb; then Mr. Morgan recovered himself, and with a muttered: "What is up now, I wonder?" he strode over and picked up the package. On the outside was neatly typed: "Hiram J. Morgan," nothing more. Puzzled, he tore the envelope open and fished out a type-written letter to which was pinned a sheaf of other papers. No sooner had he commenced perusing the letter, when he let out a roar which would have put an Apache to shame, and which certainly scared Mrs. Morgan nearly out of her wits.

"She's kidnapped!" he shouted. "Kidnapped!" he repeated with rising inflection.

"Who is kidnapped?" asked Mrs. Morgan, bewildered. She had not yet quite recovered from the effects of that initial war-whoop.

"Ain't I telling you?" yelled Hiram J., throwing grammar to the wall. "They have kidnapped Marion, the dogs! Where is the sergeant? I must get hold of the sergeant at once!" And he rushed out of the summer-house, leaving his wife standing there, utterly bewildered, and half afraid that the strain of the morning had been too much for her husband, and that his brain had snapped at last!

"Hey! Hey!" shouted Hiram J., exerting his lungs and vocal chords to their utmost capacity. Those men who were still in camp came on the run. The whole assembly was treated to the astonishing sight of Hiram J. coming running full tilt down the hill, waving a paper wildly in one hand, and roaring from time to time. He reached the bottom without breaking his neck; but almost out of breath. In a few terse words he explained the situation to his retainers, and dispatched some of them to fetch the sergeant and Hayes without delay. The dramatic possibilities of the moment being exhausted, the retainers retired to their various interrupted tasks; but Hiram J. commenced stamping forwards and backwards on the shore near the jetty, impatiently awaiting the sergeant's return. Here he was joined for a few minutes by his wife, who had at last found her way down from the hill; but on having had the circumstances, as known to her husband, explained

to her, she retired to her tent to lie down on the plea of a headache. Hiram J. continued his lonely patrol of the beach, soon as the sergeant's canoe appeared on skyline, the little craft cleaving the water in two rolls of white foam, he commenced to impart his stupendous news to Weston in a series of roars which were quite intelligible; and swept by Mr. Morgan's heavy verbal barrage Weston's canoe alongside the jetty.

"What's up?" he inquired breathlessly as he jumped out of the canoe.

"Haven't I just been telling you?" shouted Hiram J. "My daughter's been kidnapped! Read this!" And he thrust the letter into the sergeant's eager hands.

As the sergeant read, his face cleared. "Thank God it isn't worse," he ejaculated with relief.

"Worse! Worse!" almost yelled Hiram J. in his indignation. "What could be worse than having one's only daughter taken by the hands of a gang of ruffians? Answer me that!"

"Well, Mr. Morgan, you would have been convinced of there being worse things," "Go on," you had shared my experience on the lake. And in a few sentences he related to Hiram J. how he had found his daughter's canoe capsized on the lake, and the obvious interference which he had been forced to draw from the find.

"Good Lord!" cried Mr. Morgan, sobered and pale, when the sergeant had finished his recital. "It would have about killed her mother if she had heard about the overturned canoe before we got this letter. I suppose we ought to be slightly grateful to these ruffians for giving us timely advice about our daughter's safety, anyhow. But what are we going to do now? I'm all in the and don't seem to be able to think clearly. Anyway, this is more in your line, Sergeant, so what do you suggest?" And he wiped his dripping brow with his handkerchief, while he looked pleadingly at Weston.

The sergeant did not answer at once. Instead he once more scanned the letter and documents.

"I can't quite get the hang of the whole business," he said at last. "I see roughly that somebody wants you to sign these papers in order to have the Morgan Fruit Import Syndicate dissolved, and that that somebody intends to hold your daughter captive till the documents are signed, sealed or

delivered; but what is the actual ob-

"Oh, good Lord! It's too long and intricate a business to be gone into fully," groaned Hiram J. "But I'll try to give you a general outline. I happened to find out that a certain concern tried to collect the whole of the fruit import, and smash the rest of us all to hell. I at once set to work and collected around me a bunch, and when I left New York we had just completed all arrangements for a Syndicate which would knock the other fellows into a hat. If I sign these papers it would mean that our group will immediately be taken up; the other fellows will take action at once; and then good-bye to the rest of us!" "Do you mean that your business will be ruined or something if you sign these papers?" inquired Weston.

"Not quite as bad as that, I suppose, but it would be a nasty knock."

"But surely you can expose these fellows some way. Sue them in court for this outrage or something. And an exposure like that would surely break them up?"

"Good Lord, Sergeant! You don't know anything about crooked finance than a new-born babe, I notice. Do you think that those fellows have left any trails to connect them up with this kidnapping? Not a trace. You could take them before any court in the U.S.A. and you wouldn't find a Grand Jury that would return a true bill against them. And, besides, even if I did go to the courts about it, the mischief would have been done, and past all remedy! But all this leads us nowhere. What do you advise me to do?"

"Well, don't sign anything in a hurry. We want to get the better of these crooks. There is Hayes coming now. We'll discuss it all with him, and between us we ought to get it on some plan."

HIRAM J. felt disappointed. When he sent for the sergeant, he had, somehow, expected the latter to turn up with a rush, and then, almost in his stride, to produce his daughter like a kind of a hat-trick. But instead of that the sergeant had approached the whole matter in a maddeningly deliberate manner. Hiram J. considered a few words on the subject in order. "Aren't we rather wasting our time? Wouldn't it be better to set out in pursuit of the kidnappers at once?"

"No use to set out in pursuit before we know in which direction to do the pursuing," answered Weston dryly. "Don't you worry, Mr. Morgan! One hour more or less won't make any difference, and it is no use starting anything before we have formed a few plans. When we first start going, watch our dust! Leave it all to me!"

A few minutes later Hayes arrived, and the situation was rapidly outlined for him. The recital drew from him a stream of running comments, composed of words, which, though forceful and illustrative, would hardly have been found in any self-respecting dictionary.

"Now let us see where we stand!" said the sergeant at last. "Did you notice any suspicious-looking strangers hanging about the town before you left, Jim?"

"Waal, now you mention it, there was a couple of tough-looking sons of Uncle Sam's hanging around the pool-room," drawled Jim.

"What did they look like?"

"Like Chicago toughs," answered Jim promptly. "They had the boys guessin', 'cause they didn't seem to have no business or nothing. That's the reason I noticed them. They seemed to be pretty thick with Joe Moiese an' Dan Bernard."

"That's rather interesting," said Weston thoughtfully. "Those two are about the worst breeds in the district. Yes, I think we are getting warm. Did the two strangers look like woodsmen?"

"Not them!" answered Jim contemptuously. "They looked as if they would be about as much at home in the woods as a bottle of booze at a tee-total congress."

"Well, listen now!" said the sergeant briskly. "I have been thinking things over, and this is the way I sum up the situation. The only way the kidnappers can get Miss Morgan out of the country is either to take her back the way we came, or else work around either by the west or by the east. The two last alternatives would mean following such difficult and twisting trails, that they would decidedly not appeal to any man not used to the woods. On the other hand, to return the way we came would be foolish, as it is far too public. The most obvious course open to them, therefore, is to hide out somewhere in the woods, till you, Mr. Morgan, have carried out the instructions of whoever hired them, and . . ." Here he suddenly broke off, and

seemed to be groping around in his head for some elusive memory. "Damn!" he suddenly shouted. "I think I have it!" And without further explanation he started on the run to the jetty, where Angus was seated, placidly smoking, beside their canoe. An animated conversation at once sprang up between the two.

"What on earth is up with him?" inquired Hiram J. in blank astonishment.

"I guess he's got a hunch. That head of his is sure a quick worker, and he can spot a fire where you wouldn't hardly notice smoke," answered Jim Hayes. "Gosh, if I had half of his brains I'd be sitting in Parliament by now, smoking big cigars an' drinkin' champagne all day!"

But Hiram J. was only half listening to Hayes' description of a Parliamentarian. He was watching Weston anxiously, wondering what the next development would be.

At last the sergeant and Angus seemed to have come to some kind of understanding, and the former returned to Hiram J. and Hayes.

"I think we have established the location of their camp!" he said hurriedly. "While we were up in the Grassy Hills the other day Angus spotted signs of a fire up north and told me about it. I didn't pay much attention to it at the time, and had forgotten all about it; but it suddenly came back to me a little while ago. I've just talked it over with Angus, and he tells me that he knows of just such a spot where people would be likely to lie hidden up there where he spotted the fire. Now, Angus and I are going to investigate that place, and any other likely places in that locality in case the first proves a disappointment. But we don't want to take any chances. So you, Jim, take the fastest canoe you have in your outfit, and your best man, and run down to the Gulch. If they tried to get out that way you'll find their tracks on the portage on the north side of the rapids. They won't have shot the rapids, with loaded canoes and a bunch of greenhorns. Moiese and Bernard are too wise for that! If you find their tracks, you know what to do!" he suggested grimly. "If you don't find any signs of them there, follow the Grassy Hills River up to the spot I have in mind. There's a creek runs into the river a couple of miles north of the place where that trail is cut across to the

lake, and some way up this creek a bog comes running down from a hollow in the hills. It's in that hollow that Angus expects the camp of being located. You go straight for that place. If Angus has not have drawn a blank there, I'll leave instructions so you can follow our trail. Be sure to take grub for four or five days along with you; and, of course, your artillery. We never know how far we will have to travel in case they have made a bolt for it. What they might do when they get there. Now, get a move on!"

"Watch my dust!" shouted Hayes, to Hiram J., "Don't you worry no more. Mr. Morgan here in a few days' time on the warpath!" And with that parting assurance he was off.

"Well, I'll be hustling along, too," continued Weston. "Please tell Mrs. Morgan not to be uneasy. I'll guarantee to have Miss Morgan here in a few days' time the latest. Good-bye!" And he ran down to his canoe, leaving Hiram J. in a state of bewilderment, excitement and hope.

The sergeant and Angus first raced across to their camp, where they each secured a blanket, their rifles, the sergeant's revolver, and a minimum of grub for a five day trip. They intended to travel as light as possible.

They next laid a course for the portage. After a close examination of the ground, Angus, who was an expert in such matters, declared that he had found the footprints of the girl and two white men on the trail.

"That clinches the matter!" cried the sergeant, elated. "I think we have our party now!"

They decided that it would be poor policy to follow the portage across. They would in all probability be watched, and they did not intend to advertise their approach. The sergeant knew from long experience the advantage of a surprise attack.

THEY, therefore, continued right on to the northern extremity of the lake and from there they cut cross-country to the river. It was a long and arduous trip through the forest, as there were no trails and packing their canoe and outfit materially added to the difficulties of the task. Often they had to cut their way with axes through the brush and scrub timber, and at other times they had to make long detours around bogs and muskegs. But they

doggedly on, and at long last they reached the river. They sat down by the for a much needed rest, and Angus told Weston that, according to the sergeant's estimation, they were about a mile of miles above the spot they were going for, and on the opposite bank of the river. After a short council of war it was agreed that they cross the river where they were, *cache* their canoe and outfit in a brush on the opposite bank, and then creep up to the suspected place on foot; keeping the kidnappers from the rear. This program was followed, as soon as they had had some cold lunch, washed with water. For obvious reasons they did not dare make a fire.

Quietly the two men glided through the brush. They were both experienced woodsmen, and hardly a rustle indicated their progress. At last Angus, by a cautious sign, made known to the sergeant that the objective lay just beyond a hill which was rearing up in front of them.

With the utmost caution they slid up the hill, wriggling through the undergrowth on their stomachs like two giant lizards. Suddenly, as they neared the crest, Angus stopped and lifted his nose. He sniffed a few times, and then winked at the sergeant. The latter, thereupon, also treated himself to a whiff of atmosphere. There was no doubt about it. There was hanging on the air the tang of a fire!

They now increased their caution, and very slowly, with many stops, they wriggled their way farther and farther up, till at last, from the friendly shelter of some bushes, they had a bird's-eye view of a plateau. Right below them were three tents, the first in front of one of the tents their eyes discovered a most gratifying and agreeable sight. On a log sat Miss Morgan, chin in hand, gazing moodily down the valley. On the opposite side of the valley, following the direction of her gaze the sergeant and Angus beheld, seated by a small fire, two white men and their old friends, Messrs. Hiesse and Bernard.

Not being warned by any sixth sense that the distribution was eyeing them vindictively from the crest of the hill, Joe, Slippery and their retainers calmly occupied themselves with the tasks of the moment. The two breeds were preparing tea by a fire in which they fed carefully with dry twigs. Slippery had insisted on five o'clock tea being included in Miss Morgan's diet, to

show her that her captors were "real gents-o'-the-world." Joe and Slippery were sitting close by, busily "rolling the bones." They had started a game of craps as a last protective bulwark against the spreading gloom.

The sergeant, having finished his examination of the stronghold of the kidnappers, whispered to Angus: "Keep them covered; but don't fire before I tell you to!" He then carefully slid his rifle forward, took careful aim at the water near the group by the pond, and fired. He followed his shot with a peremptory and loud: "Hands up!"

The quartette by the pond was stirred into immediate action. The whine of the bullet, whistling past their heads, had warned them that the shot was not merely a playful prank on the part of somebody, and that the accompanying shout was not to be considered as a kind of suit-yourself proposition. They jumped up like Jacks-in-the-box and stretched their hands well over their heads; and in this position they awaited with considerable chagrin and quivering knees, further developments.

"Keep them covered, Angus!" came the voice of doom from the hill. "Shoot if they move; but don't damage them more than you can help!" Having delivered this dictum, the sergeant slid down the hill-side. Having reached the floor of the basin he walked straight up to Miss Morgan.

"Are you all right?" he inquired, removing his battered hat.

"Yes, thank you!"

"And have they treated you anywhere near decently?"

"Under the circumstances, yes!" answered Miss Morgan with some reluctance. She felt that it would have been more of a satisfaction to her if she could have reversed the statement; but she decided to be fair.

"Excellent! I'm awfully glad!" exclaimed Weston with a wholehearted smile. "I must say I was rather worried. Gentlemen like your late hosts are generally somewhat eccentric and unorthodox in their methods, I understand. But as long as you are all right, that's all that matters! Oh, by the way! I am afraid I was rather abrupt when I arrived. I really think I forgot to say good morning! But you must excuse my seeming rudeness."

"Oh, that is all right," said the girl handsomely. "But how did you manage to find me?"

"That was easy," grinned the sergeant. "Those babes in the wood over there, in their trusting innocence and inexperience, showed me the way. In other words, Angus happened to spot their fire from the Grassy Hills when we were up there hunting; and he told me about it. As soon as we heard what had happened to you we hurried along, and . . ."

Bang! came the report from Angus's rifle at that moment.

The hapless Slippery had been visited by an inquisitive fly, which had squatted on his nose, with the apparent intention of homesteading that delectable part of Slippery's geography. Slippery had disputed its right, and had tried to evict the intruder by contorting his nasal organ till it had a fair semblance to a cork-screw; but without success. The fly calmly polished its wings with its hind legs, and its head with its fore legs; utterly indifferent to the eccentric behavior of its perch. It was the moment when the fly decided to snatch a free meal from the skin on Slippery's nose that the latter decided that strong measures were indicated! He lowered his right hand with the intention of taking firm action; but the report from Angus's rifle, and a small spurt of earth some five feet in front of his toes, made him abruptly abandon the attempt; and he again froze into his personation of a Pharaonic priest, calling down the invocation of heaven over the human sacrifice.

"Gosh!" he gasped, his eyes bulging; and even the fly was scandalized and flew away.

The sergeant glanced across to where the quartette were standing.

"The gentlemen must have been getting restless," he remarked to Miss Morgan with a grin, "or else Angus would not have reminded them of his presence in that rude, abrupt manner. I had better clip the wings of yon birds before they start getting reckless. Will you please take this gun, Miss Morgan," he continued, handing her his revolver, "and help me keep an eye on those blots on the landscape, till Angus can join us?"

Miss Morgan accepted the proffered six-shooter, and together they advanced towards the group, the sergeant keeping his rifle at the ready. When they had got within ten feet of their captives, the sergeant ordered a halt and issued his directions.

"Please, Miss Morgan, will you cover that little one there?" he said, pointing at

Slippery. "And don't be squeamish about shooting if he moves. But fire low down on his legs. Don't kill him if you can't do it. It would be a shame to let him off as that!" A speech which Slippery, so callous and heartless to the highest degree, answered Miss Morgan in a tone which was not sound nice and gentle to the susceptible Slippery.

"I'll take care of the rest of the Snips at school!" continued the sergeant. "Moiese and Bernard, can lower your heads but don't move!"

"Say, Sergeant . . ." commenced Miss Morgan but Weston cut him short.

"No you won't, Moiese! You can't open your packet of woes when you get scattered. Weston raised his voice to a shout: "Angus on down, Angus!"

A FEW minutes later Angus had joined the happy reunion, and the sergeant at once mapped out for him his immediate activities:

"Now, Angus, relieve those gentlemen of any guns, knives, blackjacks, brass knuckles, or any other instruments of aggression they may possess. I think you will find a pair under the left armpit of each!" Angus tested this statement and found it correct.

"Got any rope around here, Moiese?" continued the sergeant.

"Aha!" grunted Moiese sullenly.

"Good! Perhaps you'll be kind enough to produce said rope—and quickly! And you go along with him, and if he tries to monkey-tricks, you know what to do!"

Angus nodded, and moved off in the direction of Moiese, who had started towards the tent normally occupied by him and Bernard. They soon reappeared with a coil of fine, but stout, manilla cord.

"Just the thing!" remarked Weston approvingly. "Now, Angus! Start on the little one, and truss him up good and solid, so that we can relieve Miss Morgan of her responsibility!"

Angus set to work with vim and goodwile and in a few minutes Slippery was sitting on the ground, bound hand and foot.

"Thank you, Miss Morgan! Sorry we have bothered you for so long. Your appetite must be quite numb. All right, Angus; next gentleman!"

Soon Joe was sitting beside his partner in sorrow, also securely trussed. The sergeant turned to Miss Morgan:

"Would you like to go to your tent, or want to remain here? I'll have to entertain these gentlemen. You rather stay here if you had the deck-ropes from your tent? Right! Angus, please bring the chair you'll find in that tent over and bring it here. Isn't Angus a good fellow for trussing up people though, Miss Morgan?" continued Weston admiringly, as Angus had departed. "I doubt if the Sni could have disentangled himself if he had had a go at him."

Weston and Slippery were inclined to agree with the sergeant, having had personal experience in the matter; but, somehow, they found it inexpedient to voice their opinion.

Miss Morgan was frankly indifferent; so the matter was dropped without discussion.

Angus returned with the chair, and Miss Morgan settled herself comfortably.

The sergeant squatted, cross-legged, on the ground near her, and facing him were the prisoners; Joe and Slippery in the middle and behind them, unfettered but sulky, the two breeds. Angus was immediately detached to fetch the sergeant's and his own kit, and their outfit.

"Now, as we are all comfy, we'll start a preliminary inquiry into this business; and as we are waiting for Angus," commented the sergeant.

"If you question us, we won't answer!" cut in Joe.

Weston contemplated the speaker reflectively for a few moments.

"I am not absolutely sure about that," said the sergeant at last with a grim smile. "I have a very persuasive way about me when the occasion calls for it. But let that pass! At present I'm more interested in what Miss Morgan has to say. I know more or less all about you two. To put the thing in your own slang: I have a line on you two guys! What's that. Would you be kind enough, Miss Morgan, to relate all the circumstances in connection with your capture?"

Miss Morgan, nothing loath, promptly related the whole affair in plain, compressed language; glossing over nothing; omitting nothing. But at the same time she did not hold forth the flimsiest circumstance which could have been grasped by the sergeant and Joe as a saving straw. Her recital of past events particularly grieved Slippery. Not once, during the recital, did he dwell on his own correct, conciliatory, set-of-the-world attitude towards her! A down, dirty deal, he reflected bitterly,

and just what one might expect from a skirt!

When the tale had been told, the sergeant contemplated the two offenders for a while.

"So they threatened to truss you up and gag you?" he said at last, and he added somewhat grimly: "Good!" a sentiment which the Syndicate refused to second and support.

"And whose was that brilliant brain-wave, upsetting your canoe?" proceeded Weston, airing a pet personal grievance.

Miss Morgan extended her right, shapely hand towards Joe—who, however, was not in the right mood to admire its perfect mould just then—and the index finger pointed straight at that gentleman.

"That is the man who did it, and he seemed to positively glory in the idea that he would make you believe that I was drowned!" she said vindictively.

"I see," remarked the sergeant quietly; but the look he bent on Joe made Slippery, who intercepted it, shake hands with himself, mentally, because he was not the guilty party; and his spirits rose several points.

"And this other man? Did he approve of the proceedings?" continued the sergeant.

"He most assuredly did! And quite wholeheartedly!"

"I see!" repeated the sergeant; and the look with which he now favored Slippery caused the latter to promptly cancel his previous handshake.

The sergeant now accosted the two half-breeds:

"You, Moiese and Bernard; how did you happen to get mixed up in this business? I thought claim-jumping and booze-smuggling was about your limit."

Moiese at once poured forth their prepared story in Cree. Weston listened to the sad, pathetic tale with a feeling akin to admiration. He had had dealings with Moiese and Bernard in the past, and he mentally put the story down as one of their best efforts!

"So you two poor innocents were lured into this affair through false pretences on the part of those naughty men," he said, when Moiese had run dry. "Tut, tut! Too bad! In this world of injustice the innocent so often are made to suffer along with the guilty, so I'm afraid that you will all be granted free board and lodgings by the Dominion for more years than I care to count. Well, such is life!"

"Say! You talk a lot!" spoke up Joe. "You ain't judge an' jury, lemme tell you!"

"And lucky for you that I am not!" countered the sergeant smartly. "If I had been, things would have gone hard with you! I think I would have started in by knocking your heads together; and then," he glanced at them reflectively for a few moments, "and then I think I would have repeated the treatment from time to time, about once an hour, say. And I have a good mind to start in right now!" he flung at them, glaring vindictively at the two principal offenders.

Slippery quaked and wished himself elsewhere. He abhorred physical violence, and particularly when he was listed as a possible or certain victim. But Joe was not so easily cowed. He glared back at the sergeant and quoth:

"Say! It's all right for you to show off in front of a skirt, when we's tied up an' helpless. You wouldn't have been so chirpy if me an' my partner had been free; I don't think! Talk is cheap!" he ended with an ugly sneer.

"It is!" agreed the sergeant heartily, with a grin. "That is the reason I indulge in it so much. Only thing I can afford to revel in without stint these days. Anyhow, cheer up! You may still have the delight and pleasure of interviewing me with your arms and legs in good working order. All may still arrange itself for the best."

At this point in the cosy chat between jailer and prisoner, Miss Morgan created a diversion. She was getting bored. She always did, when she did not happen to hold the center of the stage.

"Don't you think, Sergeant, that all these queries and things could be postponed till some other time? It is really not very entertaining to listen to," she said somewhat coldly.

"I'm sorry!" exclaimed Weston apologetically. "Of course, all this must bore you. The inquiry is hereby adjourned."

BUT Weston was not at all sorry. He was annoyed. Strongly annoyed.

He hated to have anybody interfering between him and prisoners, and he found the girl's interruption extremely tactless and ill-advised. He had kept up the bantering conversation with Joe for a purpose. He had noticed that Joe was about on the boiling point, and that very little was needed to make him boil over. And he

knew that when a man boils over, liable to spill things, which he knows moments would have kept cooly m away in the most secret recess of ind And Weston wanted all the information could get out of any of the reprob

They all settled down to await return with more or less impatient desultory conversation had sprung between Miss Morgan and Weston; but there was a certain lack of vim and pep in the dialogue. Slippery was busyying n with some mental speculation as to the probable wages of sin in the present stance; but the vista his imagination had conjured up was decidedly unpleasant.

Joe, more hardened, calmly meditated the probable "lines" Stony Mountain penitentiary was run on! He had had numerous experience of Canadian prisons because that was his first visit to the Dominion. He had heard that it was possible to "square" a British judge, the reflection filled him with a strong feeling of injustice and foreboding. He thought all this had happened in the land of the free and the home of the brave, of democracy and graft! And then suddenly a tremendous thought struck him! He was a free-born citizen of the U.S.A., and no dam' Britisher had no right to pass judgment over him! It wasn't done! He was a representative of a mighty nation; and the sooner that long-legged Britisher realized it, the better. He was just about to point out to the sergeant the errors of the latter's reasoning when the sound-waves of the valley violently agitated by a kind of Apache war whoop which was roared forth by a person suddenly shot up from behind a thick growth of juniper that grew in the gap formed the gateway to the basin. Miss Morgan and the sergeant looked up and found that the originator of the sound, though startling, effort was Jim Hayes who was waving his hat triumphantly in the air as he was striding towards them.

"Say! This is sure fine and dandy," boomed Jim Hayes. "When I found signs on the portage, we did some work gettin' along to this place. I crept up the hill an' had a peep at things behind yon juniper, an' say! that tabbello which met my optics was sight for sore eyes! You all right, miss?"

"Quite, thank you!"

"Now that's sure fine! So these abductors of lone females?" continued

Hayes, looking Joe and Slippery over with considerable interest. "Ain't the sergeant cooly marvel?" he continued in a confidential undertone to Miss Morgan, his eyes affectionately following Weston.

"Why?" asked Miss Morgan.

"Well, gettin' you out o' this scrape in impatience quick time for one, o' course," answered Hayes, eyeing Miss Morgan in astonishment and surprise.

"I can't really see anything marvellous in that," said Miss Morgan, a share of irritation in her voice. "According to what the sergeant told me himself, he had known about this camp for some time, so I fail to see your point!"

Jim Hayes stared at her for a few moments in frank, open-eyed amazement, and mentally he decided that there were occasions when a "dam' good larruping" would do Miss Morgan a world of good!

"No, o' course you wouldn't!" he snapped at last. "You wouldn't o' thought it marvellous if a guy flung himself between you and a flyin' bullet! You would only say that he just happened to be there when the bullet happened to come along!" And with that bit of heavy sarcasm he turned on his heel and strode towards Weston. He did not trust himself to remain any longer for fear of getting rude!

Miss Morgan followed his retreating form with eyes that sparkled with anger, a red spot of resentment flaming on each cheek. Somehow, this common ruffian of a Hayes always managed to make her feel cheap; and she resented it extremely!

"Say, Wess! What's the program, now?" asked Hayes when he reached the sergeant.

"You take Miss Morgan back at once, Jim. We won't keep her parents in suspense more than we can help. I'll wait here for Angus, and we'll bring this little lot along. We'll leave their tents and outfit and send out for them to-morrow. We'll have to take everything with us, when we freight the prisoners down to the Bend."

"Say!" spoke up Joe, who had overheard Weston's remarks, and who considered this a good opportunity to give his instructive lecture on the correct intercourse between nations. "You ain't goin' to touch any of our stuff, see? You ain't got no right to handle us or our things! We's free-born Americans an' . . ."

"Oh, dry up!" ordered the sergeant tersely.

"I ain't! I want to have my say! You'll get into trouble if you . . ."

"If you don't shut up at once," interrupted the sergeant, "I'll gag you!" And to give weight to his threat, he produced his handkerchief and eyed Joe with grim expectation.

Joe realized that he meant business, and decided to keep his views on international etiquette to himself for the time being.

Nor did the program meet with the unqualified approval of Hayes. There never had existed what could possibly be termed a state of easy camaraderie between Miss Morgan and him; but just now, in view of the girl's recent disparaging remarks anent Weston's rescue expedition, he felt that a certain distance between that lady and him would be desirable and satisfying. Frankly, he did not relish the idea of an outing with her just then; but there was no way out of it, he supposed. Holding the views he did with regard to Weston's interest in the girl, he feared that Weston would hardly see eye to eye with him in the matter.

Candidly, he could not understand what a fine sensible fellow like Weston could see in a pretty-faced Jane without any head-fillings, like Miss Morgan. But that was Wess's own funeral!

"All right, Wess," he said without enthusiasm, his self-communion finished. "We'll hustle along at once."

A short while after they had taken their departure Angus turned up. He was promptly set to work piling all the Syndicate's belongings into the tents, which were afterwards tightly laced up, Weston in the meantime keeping a fatherly eye on the captives. Soon the party was on its way. Joe and Slippery—their arms pinioned, but legs free—were given the place of honor at the head of the procession. They travelled in their own canoe, their guides officiating at the paddles. In their wake came the sergeant and Angus. Before the start Weston had uttered sage counsel and advice to the prisoners:

"Now, see that you have no accidents with your canoe! And if you want to live to a ripe old age, don't try to play the disappearing act! Angus and I will have our artillery always ready to hand."

The counsel, though possibly somewhat sketchy, was accepted by the recipients

as entirely sound; and they scrupulously adhered to the spirit of it during the whole of the mournful trip to Camp Morgan!

CHAPTER XI

THE following morning a council of war was held in the living tent at Camp Morgan to inquire into the outrage and decide on the steps to be taken against the offenders. The members were: Mr. Morgan, Weston, and Jim Hayes.

The sergeant had arrived with his bag at the camp some time during the preceding evening, and had remained there over night. He, Hayes and Angus had taken turn and turn about to guard the prisoners, so as to eliminate any possibilities of corruption and bribery.

The meeting was opened by Hiram J., who put to the assembly this profound query:

"What are we going to do with those hooligans?"

The sergeant hesitated. It was a confounded nuisance, of course, but there was no way out of it!

"I suppose I'll have to take them to Portage Bend and charge them," he said slowly and resignedly.

Hiram J. reflected for a few moments.

"That would mean that I would have to give evidence in court?" he inquired after a while.

"Most assuredly! Both you and Mrs. Morgan, Miss Morgan, Hayes, Angus and yours truly. First before the magistrate and later on at the Sessions!" answered Weston.

"Confounded nuisance!" muttered Hiram J., his face clouding; and he stopped to think. Several minutes passed by before he again popped to the surface.

"It won't do!" he said with determination. "It won't do to charge those fellows! It would mean that I would have to hang about the court and have my holidays spoiled. And I refuse to have my holidays spoiled! When everything is said and done, those two fellows are only privates in the ranks, so to speak. It is the principals I want to get at. And I'll make it good and hot for them!" he said grimly. "I'll send a letter to all the leading newspapers in New York, explaining the whole affair, and

have them publish the precious papers that sent me to sign! That'll about finish the Gulf Fruit Import Company!" He paused for a few moments, to gloat in silent ecstasy over that delectable prospect.

"Anyhow," he ended. "We'll have to turn those fellows loose. Really we have to. It is the only sensible thing to do!"

"Say! You ain't aimin' to let a buny of rough-necks like them get away with a raw deal like this?" demanded Hayes, staring at Hiram J. "Gosh!" he added, with disgust he managed to cram into that only word, caused Hiram J. to wriggle uneasily in his chair.

"Now look at the thing sensibly, Jim!" he pleaded. "You wouldn't want me to spoil my trip after I have come all the way from New York, would you? And here is another point. Sergeant Weston would have to forfeit the rest of his leave also, if he took further action; and you surely don't want that to happen?"

Hiram J. felt more at ease. That last argument was a corker and ought to clinch the matter, he thought complacently.

"I guess there is something in what you say," Hayes admitted handsomely. "It would be a darn shame to spoil the picnic. But it does get a fellow's goat to think of them two pieces o' Limburger cheese getting tin' away with their dirty deals for nothing. We might knock their heads together as a kind o' farewell celebration, though!" he ended, brightening. "What say you, West?"

Weston, who had been sunk in a deep reverie, came to with a start.

"Eh? What's that?" he inquired.

"Mr. Morgan, here, is full out for lettin' them bohunks fade away, so as not to spoil the picnic; an' I'm just advisin' knockin' their nuts together, so they have something to remember us by!"

"Bright, sensible scheme," commented Weston judiciously, "except for your last suggestion. We can't have any assault and battery, you know! Against the law!"

"Gosh, yes! The law!" exclaimed Hayes. "That reminds me. If we let them birds fly, wouldn't it be a crime or something? I mean defyin'—no, that ain't it—avoidin'—no, that don't sound right either! Wait a bit! I've got it! Defeatin' the ends of justice! That's the baby!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "That's what we'll be guilty of, if we let them go; an' you can't be a

pers thirty to a deal like that, Wess, bein' a nish sliceman!"

He paused. "You're off the rails, old son!" answered Hiram J. easily. "This matter has never been put into the hands of the police. I have merely took a hand in the affair as a private individual, and not as a policeman." "Therefore it's up to Mr. Morgan to take a bunny steps which he considers proper. If he withicides to let them go, well—that ends the case, staatter!"

Hiram J. looked relieved; but Hayes was not only half convinced.

"Gosh, I suppose you know what's what, I right! But it hurts like hell to think, Jim! them bohunks bein' able to give us the me a-ha, after havin' slipped us a bum steer the wake they have!" sighed Hayes, regret and here is disappointment in his voice.

"Say not so, Jim!" remarked Weston, softly. "You know the old proverb: 'Our boys always find us out.' And by that token, think you may safely assume that retribution will overtake them sometime!"

"Say! What's re— re— well what you just said? He's a new one on me. I wish you wouldn't always use them high-falutin' currin words, Wess!" complained Hayes.

"Retribution simply means getting it in the neck," answered Weston with a grin. "If you start something you can't handle, you generally get it in the neck sooner or later! And something tells me that those fellows won't form the exception to the rule!"

Hayes looked suspiciously at the sergeant.

"Say! You're up to somethin', Wess! You look too dam' pleased with yourself. I'm on to you! Give us a line on what you are aimin' on startin' with them two!"

"What on earth are you talking about, Jim?" inquired Weston mildly with raised eyebrows. "You're jumping to conclusions."

"Aw, come off that horse, Wess!" interrupted Hayes. "Be a pal, an' let me in on the pro-gram!"

"Oh, well! If you put it that way! I'm going to escort the gentlemen back to their camp in person, and see that they clear out. And as one of them hinted to me that they could knock the stuffing out of me providing their limbs were free and in working order, it's possible—just possible, mind you—that during our trip, I may give them an opportunity of proving that statement."

HAYES slapped his knee, howling with glee.

"I knew it!" he shouted, gloatingly rubbing his hands together. "I knew you was goin' to slip somethin' acrost!"

Mr. Morgan, who had formed a silent audience to the preceding dialogue, looked puzzled.

"I can't quite see what you are driving at, Jim," he remarked.

"Can't you see? Ol' Wess is goin' to fight them two bohunks; an' he won't do a thing to them! Oh no! Not him!" And Hayes' merriment bubbled over again.

"Is he telling the truth, Sergeant?" queried Hiram J., highly interested.

"It may come true," answered Weston non-committally. "As those thugs hinted that they could wipe me off the map if given a fair chance, I think it only right and proper to give them an opportunity. I have a very obliging disposition that way!"

Hiram J. commenced to speak excitedly:

"Say, what's wrong with me attending the party as rubberneck Joe, the pop-eyed marvel, and . . ." He suddenly interrupted himself, and threw a quick, startled glance over his shoulder towards the opening of the tent. He had become keenly aware that, in his eagerness, he had allowed himself to suffer a serious grammatical lapse, and that, should his daughter have happened to overhear it, retribution would be swift and uncompromising! But to his relief he discovered the coast to be clear, and he resumed his discourse in a more stately vein. "I mean," he said with quiet dignity, "that, as I am an interested party, I should like to see how you deal with those ruffians, Sergeant!"

"You are welcome to come along, both of you," grinned the sergeant, "if you insist on becoming accessories before, during, and after the fact. But I'll warn you, Mr. Morgan, that if you attend this love-feast, you may have to appear in court after all. They may charge me with assault and battery, you know!"

"I'll take a chance!" cried Hiram J. boyishly. "I guess it'll be worth it!"

An hour afterwards the council, having decided their course of action, and having disposed of some other matters, rose, and in a body went to interview the prisoners. These were lined up near the tents of the

camp crew, and the sergeant addressed them:

"Look here, you! Mr. Morgan has decided that he will not prosecute any of you!"

The late Kidnapping Syndicate stared at him in speechless astonishment, almost unable to believe their own ears! Moiese and Bernard, on the other hand, kept themselves well in hand. It was against their code to betray any sentiment.

Slippery, though badly shaken, soon recovered speech.

"You mean to say, you's going to let us leg it without running us in?" he inquired.

"You put your finger on the exact hub of the matter," answered Weston.

"Say, that's damned white, I'll tell the world!" muttered Slippery, his voice husky with emotion.

"Not at all!" remarked Weston pleasantly.

Hayes snickered, and Hiram J. turned his face away to hide a grin. They were both wondering if Slippery would endorse his sentiments of gratification in, say, a couple of hours' time.

"Now listen carefully!" continued the sergeant. "You fellows will proceed to your camp; pack your outfit; and make tracks for the bright lights of Broadway as fast as you can go! If you're not well on your way by to-morrow morning, you'll be run in for good! And to prevent any misunderstandings in the future, I may add that any undue lingering in Portage Bend will be discouraged. You may have noticed a canoe that pulled out from here a little while ago manned by two stout and hefty half breeds. Well, that canoe was heading straight for Portage Bend, and the crew carried with them a letter for the officer commanding the Mounted Police Detachment down there, informing him of the arrival of your little party, and further of your little kidnapping party up here. So my advice is: don't linger! You'll also be watched till you are well on your way, so don't delude yourselves into further rash ventures. Your arsenal was also included in the cargo of yon canoe . . ."

"Say! What-cha-mean? Have you copped our guns and rifles?" broke in Joe truculently.

"You guessed it!" answered Weston briefly.

"Say! Lemme tell you somethin'. You

can't play fast an' loose with our prop like that! You can't cop a fellow's belongings like that without getting yourself into trouble! It's plain theft, that's whar y is!" Joe was getting aggressive.

"Oh, shut up; or I may still persuade Mr. Morgan to change his mind!"

"But, say! How's we going to detain ourselves on the trip down without guns?" continued Joe, tackling the matter from another angle.

"Nobody will attack you! There are no desperate characters up here, once you're left!" answered Weston tactlessly. "I'm sure even if the improbable should happen, I am convinced that your countrymen will hardly consider your loss a national disaster!" A remark which stung Joe by its unparalleled cruelty. "A C how," continued the sergeant, "if you are more interrupt my flow of wisdom I'll do you! As I was saying, your guns, etc., etc., have been forwarded to Portage Bend, so will be restored to you on arrival—minus ammunition. To prevent you from giving an untrue version of the affair to your employers, I take much pleasure in informing you that you'll have the satisfaction of reading a true and unvarnished account of your activities up here in the New York newspapers on your arrival. Mr. Morgan has forwarded to certain editors all details, even to copies of the documents you have thoughtfully forwarded to him! and all of them will be printed. That epic is also now on its way to Portage Bend!"

These words shook the Syndicate to the core! This would get Schinky's goat, ag then some! And would queer them wild him for good and always. Of all the double-crossing, dirty deals they had ever heard of, this sure about took the cake! Gosh! That would mean that they would have to go to New York a wide berth. They didn't dare face Schinky after he had had a peep at those newspapers. The deal was sure rife and decidedly not to the good!

"The prospect of seeing your adventure in print does not seem to cause you much satisfaction," continued Weston, who had noticed the expression of dismay on their faces. "Well, there's no accounting for tastes. Personally, I expected that you would by now be humming gaily to yourselves for joy. That's about all, I think, as far as you two are concerned.

"Now, Moiese and Bernard, you two

ur prop! When you return to Portage Bend
ow's be warily, and try to keep to the path
yourself righteousness as much as possible. A
t's wherly eye will be kept on you from now
e. And, before all, try to show more care
all pers discretion in your choice of associates
d!" he future!" To avoid any misinter-
to detion, he obligingly translated his sage
withoussel and advice into Cree.

the me
Y this time the proceedings had come
ere an menced to pall on Joe. Standing up
nce yo his arms trussed to his sides was not
sly. "ucive of brightening his outlook on
happe And then having to listen to that cop
men wting his head off, on top of his other
tional bles . . .

Joe ay!" he remarked. "You talk a helluva
ty. "A Can't you turn them gasworks of
yours off, so as we can get down to cases?"
m I'll Does this little chat bore you?" in-
e, etced Weston courteously and solicitously.
Bend! sorry! I like to hear the sentences
al—mis smoothly from my tongue. Call it a
om gng man's weakness, if you like; but
yours with me for a few more moments and
informbe done! I just want to add to my
actionr remarks, that my friend Angus Mac-
counzie, accompanied by a friend of his—
ew Y of them incorruptible, and particularly

Morate marksmen—will accompany you
detaour return trip for a few days, to see
s you you don't linger or err from the pre-
d all ped path. You may have noticed re-
nowly that Angus is a rather high-strung
vidual, very easily startled, and when
e to us is startled, his rifle invariably goes
oat, agl' So what I mean to say is that it
em wld be advisable for you to keep as quiet
doubossible to avoid accidents! Much as I
heard like violence and bloodshed, I have given
h! T two gentlemen definite orders to open
to g on you at the first suspicious move on
n't dr part. Now just one piece of advice.
peep the future stick to your legitimate walk
re rife such as sand-bagging, sneak-thieving
the like. This kidnapping-prospect
e in the wilds was doomed to failure
in the start. You were out of your ele-
at, out of your proper niche, so to say,
here. But even so, I hope that your ex-
periences up here will cause you to return
your native land, broader and better
oks! That's all. Thank you so much!
is little chat has been an unqualified
asure to me. I have seldom had such
appreciative and attentive audience.

We'll now proceed to the canoes and
depart!"

As they wandered down to the canoes
Hirman J. whispered to Jim Hayes:

"Look here, Jim. Is the sergeant always
so loquacious?"

"Come again," said Jim, puzzled. "That
one went a bit wide."

"I mean, does he always talk so much?"

"He sure does when he is feelin' good,
an' is aimin' to slip something across some-
body," grinned Hayes. "It always means
trouble for someone when ol' Wess gets
chatty. The meaner the stunt is they have
pulled off, the smother he gets. And, o'
course, the misguided bohunks shake hands
with themselves, and think he's a dude fool,
who's full o' gas an' wind, whom they can
hornswaggle any way they like! An' when
he then cuts loose—oh, baby! But when
there is a real job on, he's sure different.
Cold as ice, he is, an' he spits his orders
out like shots crackin' from a gun! He sure
don't waste his words then. Well, you may
have noticed it yourself. He is a great lad
all right!"

Hiram J. was in hearty agreement with
that last sentiment.

Arrived at the jetty a procession of
canoes was formed. First came Angus and
his incorruptible friend in one canoe, lead-
ing the way in accordance with certain
explicit instructions from Weston. Next
came Messrs. Joe and Slippery in their
canoe manned by Moiese and Bernard,
who were moody and sulky owing to some
undefined forebodings. Then followed West-
on in his canoe; and the rear was brought
up by Hiram J. and Hayes in one canoe.

The flotilla pushed its way northwards
along the eastern shore for a few miles.
Then the leading canoe turned into a bay
not far from the one in which Miss Morgan
had been captured on the previous day.

The canoes were beached, and the oc-
cupants climbed out. Joe and Slippery,
who still had their arms bound, princi-
pally because Weston considered it a fitting
punishment for threatening to truss up
Miss Morgan, were under protest lifted out
of their canoe. They had wanted to know
what it was all about before they stirred;
but on a few terse commands from the
sergeant to Moiese and Bernard they were
quickly scooped out and deposited on the
sand, without having their thirst for in-
formation satisfied.

The sergeant led the way to a clearing among the timbers, not far from the beach. He had discovered this spot during one of his rambles with Miss Morgan; and even then it had mentally commended itself to him as an ideal place for an out-door ring with its level, hard floor covered with short, smooth grass.

Arrived in the clearing Weston called a halt, and ordered that the bonds of the prisoners be removed.

"Now," he said as soon as the operation had been performed, "as soon as you two fellows have got the circulation back in your arms you are going to fight me! You," he said, directed to Joe, "expressed the view yesterday that I would not be so chirpy—that was your sweet expression, I think—if you and your friend had your arms free. Well, here's your chance to prove the extent of my chirpiness! Of course, I intend to take you both on at the same time."

Slippery stared at the speaker, aghast! So that was it! That Coney Island affair all over again! Gosh, no! Anything but that, so long as he was conscious! But Joe took the proposition with more equanimity. He had in his day served an apprenticeship in a New York gang, and had on occasions taken a hand when feelings between his own and some rival gang had been running high, so he had something like a nodding acquaintance with violence. He frankly admitted to himself, however, that a fight was more to the good if one had the reassuring feel of black-jack in one's hand. But there was the recompense that there was nothing to suggest any characteristics of the bruiser in the sergeant as far as he could see; and besides, he had Slippery as the staunch co-worker and ally; so he was willing to tell the world that by their joint efforts they'd sure be able to fix that dud policeman's clock!

"Say! I an't gonna fight you, nor nobody else!" exclaimed Slippery, who had by now marshalled his thoughts. "I ain't no fighting man!"

But Slippery's last statement was slightly wrong. He had fought on several occasions, nor was he adverse to fighting if it was his kind of a fight! And his firmly-rooted idea of personal combat was to approach his adversary cautiously from the south, grasping a trusty black-jack firmly in his fist, when the afore-mentioned antagonist was

heading north. Then, at the psycho moment, he would rush to the attack if terve and dash; the black-jack would be brought into action; and Slippery it stand a proud, unquestioned victor! there was sense in that kind of fight, sir! No other kind of fight for me! Slippery.

But the sergeant evidently differed a Slippery. He contemplated him coldly k said indifferently:

"Oh, well. If you haven't been a figman heretofore, your first lesson with now! Of course, if you don't want to to me together, I'll take you one by one the treat you each in turn to a good wen hiding! I leave the choice entirely to was selves!"

SLIPPERY was eager and willing! continue the argument in fav he peace and goodwill, but Joe cut him't y by growling in his ear.

"Close your mug, Slippery! Can't ev see that he's only a long string-beaner's dude? Me an' you between us'll sure had hash out o' him in no time. So shun o'

"We'll go you, all right!" he conti turning to the sergeant. "We ain't aww, to let you out o' your contract, so o lo you worry!" And his features contrd.

into an ugly sneer. "That's mighty nice of you," said-b sergeant. "Well, get the cramp out of ipp arms and give me the word when you're ready for business."

Having uttered these kind words All seated himself on the ground, where heapt joined by Hayes and Hiram J. Weid and Hayes kept up an unconcerned, ear conversation, while Hiram J. sat in sGoc ecstasy, awaiting the anticipated treadir

The half-breeds were standing stoic v about. They had aggregated into le sharply defined groups. One consisted, a Bernard and Moiese, who were unday f cloud; the unblemished formed the other We

Joe and Slippery walked up and dat the clearing swinging their arms about. W two energetic windmills; though a th n critic may have contended that Slipped the whole heart was not in the exercises. Io. ing the limbering-up process Joe whisp fl sage counsel and advice into Slippery's the regarding the tactics to be adopted in an coming fray. He instructed Slippery nts make a joint rush with him toward lect

psychological as soon as the hostilities opened—or the attack if they got a chance—and then Joe Black would attack their surprised adversary on Slippery's flank, Slippery simultaneously en-victor! the right flank; and before their opponent would have time to recover from his surprise they should be able to do some good, useful work! His different advice to try and get in some cold-kicks was vetoed by Slippery, who pointed out to Joe the fact that they only had moccasins on their feet, and that a lesson with a foot encased in moccasin was not to act as a kind of boomerang. By the meantime the arm-flexing operation went forward, and Slippery, for his part, was quite agreeable and content to let it run on for ever; but Joe was not in agree-

ment. "Willay! I guess our arms are about jake in your favor," he presently remarked to Slippery. "What do you think so?"

Slippery, who was inclined to postpone the evil moment of action, suggested a beaner stretch of arm-swinging. But Joe, sure he had commenced to feel the fatiguing of the preliminaries, decided otherwise.

"Come on, Slippery! We can't keep it so long that that guy thinks he's got us out of control. The sooner we get started, the sooner we'll knock the stuffing out of that saig-bean!"

But Slippery, his arguments exhausted, reluctantly agreed to let matters take their course.

"All right! We're ready, an' waiting!" he promptly shouted Joe to the sergeant, "Weid that Slippery might develop a change of heart."

"Good!" said Weston, getting up and treating his coat; Hiram J. and Hayes stood by him.

Weston walked lightly forward toward the sergeant, and when he was some seven paces away from them he stopped and said:

"Well, I'm . . ."

and at that moment Joe and Slippery rushed. Weston had been prepared for some such move, and his keen eyes had discovered their first movement while still in ambush. He promptly swiped Joe's tactics and flung himself at the charging couple, in the utter confusion of their plans. Both Joe and Slippery were primed to the movements to be adopted when reaching their objective; but when that objective is en-

countered half-way, things are liable to go wrong. And things did! Weston's left fist caught Joe neatly on the solar plexus, while his right connected with Slippery's chin. This last was not a particularly well directed blow, but it caused Slippery to stumble backwards and sit down on the ground; firmly decided in his mind that the battle was over as far as he was concerned. Joe in the meantime was standing doubled up, snapping for breath, while Weston lightly skipped back a few paces, awaiting the further developments. Little by little Joe regained his wind. He straightened up and saw the sergeant warily watching him. With a snarl of rage he sprang forward, his arms going like busy flails. But to his utter surprise he found that his fists never appeared to find the sergeant. The latter never seemed to be where Joe expected him to be; and this enraged Joe the more, and roused him to further frenzy. But at the same time he noticed that there did not seem to be much force behind the sergeant's return punches; and in a more than usually lucid interval it dawned on him that the sergeant seemed to confine himself to dodging his blows, while he quitted with mere love-taps. "Gosh, he's scared of me!" was Joe's complacent view of the situation. And the idea gave him more confidence. Once as he jumped back to try to regain some urgently needed breath, he discovered his hotspur partner still taking his ease on the ground.

"Get up, Slippery!" he panted, "and come into this! If you don't I'll start on you myself!"

"And quite right and proper too!" interpolated Weston with a grin. "I'll suspend hostilities till that gentleman can resume his interrupted activities!"

In face of this development there was nothing for the hapless Slippery to do but reluctantly scramble to his feet and line up alongside his partner.

"Now, Slippery, show some pep when we rush him again!" growled Joe, again going into action.

But again the sergeant met the rush half-way, and this time he caught Joe neatly on the chin. Joe toppled over backwards, and as Slippery had adopted some private tactics of his own, the outstanding feature of which was to do his fighting from behind Joe's back, Joe landed squarely on him in his fall, and both crashed over backwards

to the ground. Slippery, who served as buffer for Joe, had the wind completely knocked out of him, and he lay gasping like a fish out of water when Joe rolled clear.

This performance provoked a roar of laughter from the white members of the audience; while even the breeds showed unwonted indications of ill-concealed merriment. Hiram J. in his excitement made a backwards leap across the gulf which separated him from his youth, and he danced about shouting his appreciation to the sergeant in the half-forgotten vernacular of bygone days:

"Atta, boy! 'At's the stuff to give 'em! Knock their blocks off! Soak it to 'em!"

The sergeant watched the human tangle on the ground with a grim smile:

"Now, up you get!" he encouraged. "We haven't started properly yet!"

But Slippery was through. No matter what happened, he was out of it for good! That was flat! But Joe, his fighting blood stirred, got to his feet, stood for a few moments to steady himself and clear his brains, and, then, with a bellow of rage he sprang for the sergeant again.

THE same performance as before repeated itself. Joe had the same uncanny feeling of fighting an elusive phantom; but at the same time his conviction of the absence of hitting power in the sergeant grew more pronounced, and gave more strength to his supposition that Weston was divulging a yellow streak. "Well, I'll show him!" thought Joe, and exerted himself to get to closer grips with his opponent. And even Hiram J., who had calmed down to become once more an observant spectator, noticed the lack of aggressiveness on the sergeant's part, and voiced his observation to Hayes:

"Say! It doesn't seem to me as if there is any pep to Weston's punches! He only seems to be dancing about and dodging the other guy!"

"Just wait!" counselled Hayes. "Wess is just playin' with him. He'll cut loose any minute now!"

And even as he spoke things began to happen. Joe had by now forgotten Slippery's existence, and had come to view the affair as a personal matter between him and sergeant. But he had begun to discover that the breathing spaces were getting infrequent if not wholly absent, and con-

sequently he was commencing to experience a scarcity of breath which was becoming embarrassing. He therefore decided to force the issue by some determined and some close-in fighting. He flung himself with vim at the sergeant, firmly believing that the sergeant's punches would not hurt him. But he suffered a cruel illusion! Instead of dodging, the sergeant held his ground firmly, neatly parried the blows, and got in some of his own, which convinced Joe to his consternation that there was some brawn and muscle in him, away somewhere about his adversary. He promptly jumped back; but this time the sergeant followed him, and inexorably smashing blows continued to rain down over the unfortunate Joe. He tried to dodge and dodge; but twist as he would he could not avoid that merciless shower of blows. Whatever he did, and wherever he tottered, the sergeant and his fists seemed to follow over him. Weston's face had lost its usual appearance of easy good nature, and was stern and cold. Nimbly he jumped over the twisting and doubling Joe, each coming blow resounding in the clearing.

Hiram J. grew frantic. He was hoarse with shouting at the top of his voice.

"Atta, boy! Soak him, Wess! Jario in his dial so as he swallows his back! Soak his smeller, so's the holes point the wrong way!" and diverse other near elegant figures of speech which he had long ago forgotten, but which now came to him with a rush.

The end soon came. Weston made a dash at the gasping and floundering Joe; his fist shot out to Joe's solar plexus; Joe uttered a gasp, lowered both hands to the ground, and at the same time Weston's fist shot out and hit Joe's chin a crack, which roused startled echoes in the surrounding wood. Joe's whole body was lifted from the ground by the impact, and he crashed headwards to the ground where he lay motionless, oblivious of the world and all its doings.

Weston stood contemplating his antagonist for a few minutes. A hush had fallen over the clearing, and even Hiram had ceased to bubble. Slippery, who had watched the latter part of the fight from a strategical position on the ground, grew pale, and he muttered an awed "Gosh!" as Joe's body joined him on the grass.

As soon as the sergeant was convinced that the fighting edge had definitely

en out of Joe, he turned to Slippery:
Now, you little runt! Up you get and
decide your medicine!"

But Slippery protested energetically, al-
most with tears in his eyes, against this
firm suggestion.

As all cajoling and entreating proved to
be in vain, Weston lost his temper.

"You damned little coward!" he cried.

"I'll teach you what it means to kidnap
innocent, defenceless girls, and to leave
your pal to fight your battles for you!"

With those words he flung himself bod-
ersar on top of Slippery, turned him over on
his stomach, and straddle his back, his face
towards Slippery's heels; and with his two
rainbows and hearty goodwill he commenced
to whack that part of Slippery's anatomy
which is normally used for filling a chair.

Slippery immediately started to voice his
protest in lusty yells! Never had he con-
sidered it possible that the palm of a hand
could be so hard! He tried to wriggle
away; but found that he was firmly pinned
under the sergeant's body. And as a fit
accompaniment to his yells of distress came
the rhythmical "Slap! Slap!" from Wes-
ton's hands.

Again the audience was stirred into up-
perious hilarity; and even the breeds
back row to the wind the last vestige of their
poindical dignity and cackled like geese!

At last Weston had to give in. His arms
were aching and his hands tingling, and he
admitted that a continuation of his pastime
would be more distressing to himself than
to the victim. He got up from his perch on
Slippery's squirming body; leaving that
gentleman lying on the ground, sobbing
and sniffing from pain, humiliation and
his own art vanity.

"Moiese! Fetch some water in your hat
and douse this fellow!" ordered Weston,
indicating Joe, who had commenced to stir,
and who was moaning gently.

Moiese departed for the lake on the
public, and returned in a few moments.
He dashed the contents of his hat into Joe's
face; and soon the latter was able to sit
up with a dazed, vacant expression on his
face.

Quiet now once more reigned amongst
the audience.

Weston, still grim and stern, directed
Angus and his friend as well as Moiese and
Bernard to help the fallen gladiators to
their canoe, and push off with them at

once. He let them depart without further
injunctions or advice. He considered that
recent events had been so thoroughly in-
structive and comprehensive, that further
moralizing would be utterly unnecessary.

As the sorry procession took its de-
parture he stepped over to where the
frankly grinning Hiram J. and Hayes was
standing, and reciprocating their grins he
picked up his coat and donned it.

"Gee!" exclaimed Hiram J. "You are
sure some li'l bruiser, I'll tell the world!
You soaked them and then some! I ain't
had such a time of all right since I was a
kid!"

But suddenly, now when the exhilaration
of the first excitement had somewhat
waned, it dawned on Hiram J. that he had
been straying into forbidden pastures, and
had been allowing himself more latitude in
speech and address than was consistent
with position in the world. And with the
realization he promptly checked his further
mad career towards degeneration, and
numbly recrossed the gulf back to the firm
soil where he once more became Hiram J.
Morgan, the millionaire.

"I mean to say, it was a most gratifying
sight to see how efficiently you dealt with
those odious ruffins!" he continued, with a
dignity almost amounting to pompousness.
And having by these dignified words wiped
the slate clean, he accompanied Weston
and Hayes down to the beach, where they
watched Joe and Slippery depart in their
canoe with the one manned by Angus and
his brother guardian in close attendance.

Thereupon they climbed into their own
canoes and returned to Camp Morgan;
Hiram J. mentally confiding to himself that
it was the most enjoyable and satisfying
outing he had experienced for many a day!

CHAPTER XII

FOLLOWING the sorrowful exit of Joe
and Slippery things once more slid
into the established grooves on Clear
Water Lake.

Weston still manfully stuck to his self-
appointed job; though there were times
when he had the wistful hope that the Mor-
gans would soon get tired of camping, and
evacuate his domain. But Hiram J. seemed
as enthusiastic and energetic as ever; Mrs.
Morgan seemed to enjoy herself in her

quiet way; and the daughter seemed quite resigned. So there was every probability that they might stick it out for so long that there would hardly be enough of his leave left to give him a worth-while chance to enjoy himself, mourned Weston in his darker moments. But one day something happened which altered the situation completely.

One evening Miss Morgan and he were returning from a fishing trip. Weston was in a more cheerful mood than usual. The weather had been glorious all day, and seemed to have had a softening influence on his companion. She had been pleasant and gracious all day.

The canoe was skimming smoothly along on the velvety surface of the lake. The sun had set, and the mysterious twilight of the northern summer night had commenced to lower itself over the darkening lake, around which the dark, solemn spruces stood like grave sentinels. Up from the north end came occasional weird cries from a loon, else the silence was only broken by the splash from some belated fish, and the swish of the paddle which Weston was wielding where he was kneeling in the stern of the light craft.

In the bow, facing him, his companion was sitting comfortably on some cushions, one hand trailing in the warm water.

They had been chatting easily and comfortably for some time, when Miss Morgan suddenly remarked:

"Oh, by the way, I am bringing my rifle along to-morrow evening when we go out fishing."

"Why?" asked Weston, surprised. "There are no deer anywhere around this lake. Or perhaps you are going to try picking off partridges with your rifle?" he added with a smile.

"Not at all. I am going to try to get a moose."

"You can't shoot a moose this time of the season," answered Weston easily. "The flavor of the meat is not at all palatable just now, and hardly fit for human consumption. Even the Indians scorn it as a diet this time of the year. If you feel a craving for wild meat, we'll take another trip up to Grassy Hills and get another deer."

"I'm not thinking of meat," retorted Miss Morgan, a little scornfully. "I want to bring a moose-head back with me to

New York. One I have shot myself. It shouldn't be a difficult matter to get within easy range of one when it is submerged in the water. We could spurt up quite close to it with the canoe, while it is trying to clamber out."

"We could; but we won't," said Weston good-humoredly. "You see, the position is this: although the game-laws do not apply so far north, we have nevertheless an unwritten code up here which we all strictly follow. That is: not wantonly to kill any game. Game up here is only killed for food. And woe to the one who breaks that unwritten law. Although the law properly can't touch him, he will soon find that he has got everybody's hand against him; and that every door is closed to him. And he generally fades out of the country a sadder but wiser man."

"But you have been hunting deer yourself," protested Miss Morgan.

"Quite. But only for food. None of the meat from the deer we have shot has been wasted. And besides, there is this difference between deer and moose. While the deer is not particularly fancied by the Indians, the moose is a kind of walking supply-depot to them. The meat is their staple diet for the winter; and from the hide they get materials for their moccasins, laces for their snow-shoes, and thongs for their portage-straps. And material for a lot of other things as well. And the sinews furnish them with thread for sewing moccasins. From the bones and antlers they fashion various utensils and ornaments; so you see, the moose has a special, exalted niche of its own in the scheme of existence up here. And, consequently, trespassers against that particular animal are seriously frowned upon by the inhabitants of the north."

"That may all be very interesting," she retorted somewhat brusquely. "But it has really no bearing on the matter as far as I am concerned. I am quite determined to get that moose, even at the risk of annoying a few Indians."

"But really, it can't be done!" expostulated Weston. "You don't seem to get the point at all. Shooting a moose at this time of the season is considered an act several degrees lower than murder. And, besides, shooting a moose when it is helplessly floundered in the water is hardly a sport-

ing proposition. So I'm afraid you'll have to forgo that intention."

Miss Morgan jerked her hand out of the water and sat up straight. She thought she had detected a shade of dictation in the sergeant's words; and it stung her. Her former gentleness evaporated, and its place was taken by an antagonistic annoyance.

"It seems to me that you are trying to issue orders to me," she said coldly, with considerable hauteur.

"I'm not trying to do anything of the sort," averred Weston gravely, a little nettled by her tone. He ceased paddling and looked straight at her. "I'm merely pointing out to you why it is impossible to carry out your scheme. When in Rome do as the Romans do, you know. So the least one can do up here is to respect established customs and rules."

HIS companion's eyes commenced to sparkle ominously. It was not customary for her to have her wishes questioned or balked. Consequently, Weston's attitude was beginning to vex her exceedingly.

"I am not a bit interested in the customs and rules of this country," she said uncompromisingly. "They do not apply to me at all; nor do they impress me in any way. If people up here choose to become annoyed because I shoot one of their pet moose that is their business. And the prospect won't in any way influence my actions."

"You still haven't got me," explained Weston, determined to be patient. "The Indians imagine that they have a lot of grievances against the white people already, and that is the main reason why we try to step as carefully as possible, to avoid giving them further reasons for complaints. That is why I must seriously beg of you to let your project drop."

"What do I care for the dirty Indians and their grievances," cried Miss Morgan scornfully. "I'm fully determined to get that head; and I am going to get it!"

"I'm sorry," remarked Weston seriously. "The Indians and their grievances may, as you say, have nothing to do with you; but to us they are a great and important problem. And especially so to us members of the Police, who are, in a way, the guardians of the Indians. So not only my own convictions and sentiments in the matter, but

also my duty prevents me from encouraging or participating in your plan."

"Oh, well. Since your conscience is so tender that it compels you to refuse a perfectly innocent and reasonable request, I'll get somebody else to help me," was her biting comment.

But Weston had by now begun to feel irritated at her stubbornness and her total disregard for the reasonable arguments he had advanced. He felt very strongly about the particular subject under discussion; and considered himself amply justified in trying to turn her from her purpose. He was also of the opinion that as a guest of the country the least she could do was to show proper respect and regard for its ethics and codes.

"I think you will find it rather difficult to find anybody who is willing to help you," he said a little shortly. "And when I point out to the members of your party that I am not in favor of your scheme, I'm afraid that you'll find it quite impossible."

Miss Morgan glared at him, a flaming danger signal flashing out on each cheek. This was dictating to her with a vengeance! How dare that common policeman; that nobody; how dared he dictate to her! The insult took her breath away.

"How dare you issue orders about what I am or am not to do!" she exploded at last. "Or do you think that you have earned the right to constitute yourself judge of my actions because you have been of some slight service to me on occasions?" she ended with a sneer.

Weston stiffened, and his face hardened. The unprovoked, sneering taunt had stung him to the quick. But he managed to keep his welling anger in check.

"I don't think I have given you cause for that remark," he observed quietly though his voice shook a little.

She felt the rebuke, and more, felt that it was deserved. And in the present state of her temper that only served to heighten her anger. Her annoyance developed into a hostile, unreasoning fury.

She had been too lax in her attitude towards the policeman, she argued. Had been too condescending and kind towards him. That had been her trouble! It was about time that he was set in his right place; made to realize his position.

"Well, that is the only possible explanation I can find for your unparalleled rudeness and officiousness!" she stormed. Her

chin was in the air and her eyes flashed her anger. "How dare you, a common policeman, issue high and mighty orders to a person in my position? You seem to have forgotten utterly that your position is merely that of a guide"—this was news to Weston—"while you seem to consider yourself a kind of glorified leader and director of the whole party. It would be better if you tried to realize your position instead of trying to make yourself the judge of my actions. You will please remember for the future that if your advice is in any way desired, it will be asked for!"

Weston went hot all over, and the knuckles of his hands showed white as his grip tightened on the paddle he was holding. He was stirred to violent fury by the girl's words. He found her rebukes as undeserved as they had been unreasonable.

He felt sorely tempted to fling back some sharp retort; but he managed to get himself under proper control before anything had slipped out which might have caused him future regret and self-reproach.

"Very well. I shall not offend again," he said with quiet dignity.

Miss Morgan glowered at him for a few moments as if half hoping that he would make some further remark which would give her an opportunity of unloading some more of her spleen; but when he in silence commenced paddling again, she turned her face away, and sat gazing fixedly out on the lake. She wished she could have turned her back on her companion; but one cannot fling oneself recklessly about in a canoe. So she had to forgo that effective demonstration, to her vast regret.

So the miserable journey continued in painful silence; and it was a relief to both when the canoe at last turned into the bay, and nosed alongside the jetty.

With a curt "Good night!" Miss Morgan marched off towards the tents.

Weston half mechanically had removed his hat, and had echoed her "Good night!" Now he jammed his hat on his head, grabbed the paddle, and pushed his canoe away from the jetty, heading it towards the lake and his island home.

He dug the paddle viciously into the water, and the canoe skimmed along like a startled marsh hen. He was in a white heat of rage. It was not so much Miss Morgan's words as the way in which they had been uttered which had aroused his fury.

Evidently she regarded him as a kilted retainer only a shade above the brute. She must be thoroughly, hopelessly, and a selfish, unmitigated snob; a . . . But, as he checked further unkind characterizations of Miss Morgan which were crowding upon his tongue as he suddenly realized that, after all, he was thinking of a lady. But her vicious "splash! splash!" of his paddle served as a kind of dash for his sentiments.

"A common policeman!" he mimicked. Splash! Splash!

"It would be better for you if you would try to realize your position!" Splash! Splash!

In this mood he continued more or less half-way to the island, his paddle cutting out his wrath on the inoffensive and very calm lake.

But gradually the violent exertion commenced to take the sharp edge out of his fury, and he was able to review the situation more dispassionately.

WHAT a temper that girl possessed! he thought. If she could fly off his handle so completely at a difference of opinion over such a small and insignificant matter as the shooting or non-shooting of a moose, what would then her attitude be if really important matters were involved?

One thing was certain, he assured himself, he would give her a wide berth; and the future.

At this point in his meditations a thought struck him which made him sit up, and said to himself: He would have to clear out of here! The thought shook him and filled him with indignation; but the more he pondered the more obvious did that course appear. He could not possibly face the girl after the tongue-lashing she had given him. And to drift around on his lonesome with the prospect of an accidental meeting? "Forever" before him would be just as uncomfortable as a splash.

"Damn!" he swore fervently under his breath as the full significance of the situation sank further in. It was too late now to go and find some other place for a camp. The only course open was to return to Portage Bend, and then try to make the best of what was still left over from the wreck of his holidays.

And in a saddened and sobered mood he at last arrived at his island and headed into the lagoon. He let the canoe drift for a few moments while he looked about her.

a little tree-covered island lay so quietly invitingly there. Just abreast of him was the little park which surrounded his bungalow, and a thin wreath of smoke, curling from the chimney, signified that Angus was at home. It all looked so neat and comfortable in the soft light of the peaceful evening night; and now he had to leave it behind him.

"Damn women!" he muttered impolitely, unconsciously quoting the late lamented piper, as he dug his paddle into the water and drove the canoe up on the beach. When entering the living shack he found Angus seated cross-legged on the floor in front of the hearth, in which a small but merry fire was burning.

Angus looked up quickly when Weston entered.

"Back?" he inquired unnecessarily.

"Back," admitted Weston, dragging a chair up to the fire. "Get the bottle, Angus. I'll have a peg. There's a good boy."

Angus scrambled to his feet with alacrity. This was the kind of job he appreciated.

When they each had a mug ready to drink, Angus watched Weston with quiet curiosity. He sensed something to be wrong somewhere. First there was this early evening, which was unprecedented when Weston had been out fishing with Miss Mortherly; and then Weston's brooding air as he sat staring into the fire, puffing rhythmically on his pipe. Yes, something had shaken loose somewhere. But as it was against his code to try to wheedle information out of his friends, when information was not freely offered, he kept his peace.

Presently Weston roused himself.

"Listen, Angus. We're going to pull our boats to-morrow morning early and return to the Bend," he said shortly.

"Huh?" ejaculated Angus, startled into unconcealed amazement for once.

"I said we'll pull out to-morrow for the Bend. We'll pile all our spare stuff into the shacks and nail them up. Perhaps somebody at the Bend will want to borrow a place for the fall hunting. Anyhow, the provisions may come in handy for some one like you or someone, who is short of grub next winter. Better turn in early, as I want to get an early start!"

Angus, having got over his surprise, pondered for a while.

"Heem girl at camp give you cold should-er?" he inquired suddenly.

Weston's face tightened, and he half turned in his chair.

"I don't know what you are talking about, Angus!" he answered, and then turned his eyes back to the fire.

"I see she has!" muttered Angus, continuing the line of his logic. "Me go to bed now, an' then be fresh bright an' early to-morrow."

So saying he finished the contents of his mug, and turned towards his bunk.

About four o'clock in the morning the preparations for the exodus were commenced; and the work progressed rapidly. They had both had vast experience at this kind of thing, and knew at a glance what was wanted, what could be left, and where to put the things to be cached.

At five o'clock Weston took a canoe and slipped across to Camp Morgan. He did not relish the idea of slipping away like a thief in the night, but at the same time he did not want to face the Morgans; and so he decided to compromise by apprising Hayes of his intention to depart, and leave him to convey his good byes to the Morgans.

He found Hayes in his tent, eating breakfast.

"Hello, Wess!" grinned Hayes in welcome. "You are sure bright an' early this mornin'! Sit down an' have a cup o' coffee!"

"No, thank you. I haven't time to stay. I'm pulling back to the Bend this morning. I just remembered that there is something important I have to do down there in a few days. So give my compliments to the Morgans, and tell them I was sorry to have to leave too early to say good-bye in person!"

Hayes stared at him in speechless astonishment, his fork, loaded with bacon, poised stationary half-way to his mouth.

"What the hell is all this?" he inquired as soon as his vocal chords were working again. "You pullin' stakes! What's up?"

"I told you I had something important to do. It's absolutely necessary for me to pull out. Now, I don't want to hear any questions, arguments or discussion!" said Weston with decision. "All I want you to do is to give my respects to the Morgans."

Hayes pondered for a while; but whatever the results were of his study he kept them strictly to himself.

"All right, Wess;" he said at last. "I'll

give 'em your message. "Well, so long; an' remember me to all the boys. An' tell Connor that next time I strike town he'd better arrest me straight off the bat, if he wants to keep the full use of his eyes!"

"I'll give him your kind message, Jim!" laughed Weston, relieved that the interview was over without any embarrassing and probing questions having been put by Hayes. "Well, be good, old timer!"

The two men shook hands, whereupon Weston left the tent and strode toward his canoe.

Hayes went to the tent-opening and followed Weston with his eyes till he was well out on the lake; then he shifted his gaze to the tent occupied by Miss Morgan, and goth to himself:

"Well, young lady, I'm willin' to stake my bottom dollar that you' the cause an' reason for all these mysterious happenings! How do I know, ma'am? 'Cause I ain't no fool, an' have eyes in my head. You sure pile up the agony around you! But how Wess could fall for one like you beats me," he continued, his unjust suspicions about Weston as strong as ever. "Guess it's lack o' experience with skirts what's his trouble. I guess it would take more 'an a pretty face to make me start skiddin'," was the pious end of his self-communion. He stoutly chose to ignore the fact that not less than twice in his young life had he been cleaned out and left stranded by girls, whose chief and only assets had been what in his own peculiar tastes, he considered good looks.

CHAPTER XIII

WESTON'S unexpected appearance at Portage Bend a month before his leave was up created somewhat of a stir.

His comrades in the barrack-room evinced a frank curiosity and earnest inquisitiveness with regard to the phenomenon; but Weston had, on the trip down, prepared himself for just such a contingency, and parried all queries with barefaced evasions and a great deal of tact. He vaguely intimated to his questioners that Clear Water Lake had become too crowded and public for his retiring tastes, and, further, that he was not going to have all of his holidays spoiled by playing nurse and guardian angel to all the tenderfeet in

the district. Whereupon he deftly true. the conversation by demanding name.

his late friends Joe and Slippery. s, thou
"We had the pleasure of seeing and l
honored by their presence," laughed hos
stable Connor. "I was appointed last t
committee to the gentlemen durin ser
stay here. They did look a miserable or, to
and sulky crew, and there was a next
ble coldness and estrangement bethe pull
couple. They bore signs of havin rse m
it on the way down. Or so we the visua
first. But bringing our joint well-ey al
superior intelligences to bear on the and
it was unanimously moved, second ch.
carried, that little Richard Weston t he
been far away when they had suffer an
damages to their manly beauty. Nre.
us all about it, Wess."

Weston grinned.

"Did they pull out at once?" he d. H

"They did! They went like lam about
have just escaped the clutches of the ing t
In fact, they were keen and eager to 'll b
I handed over to them their arse on.
cording to your instructions; put t "Cou
the train; and I could almost hear got t
of relief that escaped them as the aply
pulled out. But to repeat myself, wou
all about it!" wh
I g

Weston complied. He gave them his
outline of the facts and circumstan epted
lating to the occurrences on the lake ants;
to steer the conversation away from in th
barrassing subjects. But the tale, ld b
by him, did not gain the unqualifi n th
proval of his hearers, and least that their
stable Bryan, the Canadian, who the
ered that a good story ought to be the
with enough enumerations to preven Hal
hearer from having to draw on his n's s
imagination for missing details. He id r
fore, considered it fit and proper to did
his objections. "Oh
ne

"Gosh! You do tell a story good ne
geant; I don't think!" he snorted tly
gust. "Holy mackerel! For a man dan
of shooting his mouth off like you ar n th
spin this yarn as well as a deaf and char
mute with the lockjaw. Anyhow, I "W
Jim Hayes won't be so niggardly with nal
when he returns, so you can politely ly.
the dickens and take your story with d
y."

"Thank you for them kind sentime ve
grinned Weston. "But to my some
notice that my prediction about the
ruin of the discipline around this plac m

lightly true. However, a day of reckoning was coming. But let that pass! Reverting to the present, though. He sends his love to everyone, and begged me to express his thanks for the hospitality you extended towards me the last time he was in town. And he then sent the particular message to you, the sergeant, to arrest him as soon as he strikes the next time, and keep him locked up until he pulls out again. He hinted that such a course might save any more accidents to the visual organs."

They all laughed; and Weston left them to do so, and pay his respects to Inspector Brown.

When he left behind him in the barrack-room an atmosphere of surprise and conjecture. His vague explanations had not been accepted with the blind confidence and ingenuous faith he had fondly anticipated. His late audience sensed something about the situation, and they started to voice their suspicions.

"I'll bet it's that girl!" quoth Corporal Brown.

"Course it is!" averred Bryan. "'Course I got the sergeant's goat and he beat it. It appeared to me like the kind of dame who wouldn't be particular about what she said, why she said it, or who she said it to! I guess she said it to the sergeant."

His summing-up of the situation was accepted by the other two with affirmative nods; whereupon it was decided to adhere to the inquiry until Jim Hayes' evidence could be obtained.

In the meantime the unconscious object of their inquiry had presented himself before the inspector.

"Hallo, Sergeant!" had been that gentleman's surprised greeting on seeing his right-hand man enter. "Back again already? Did you get fed up with the Great Alone, did the Morgans crowd you out?"

"Oh, the place was commencing to become a little monotonous," lied Weston truthfully and deliberately, jealously guarding his dark secret. "So I came to the conclusion that I would take your tip, sir, and try a change of scenery for a while."

"Well we all of us make mistakes occasionally; that's what makes life so interesting," smiled the inspector. "But by the way, what was all that excitement you had up there with some kidnappers? I've only had a bare outline of the affair from Wilson, and he didn't seem to know

much about it. What exactly happened?"

"Do you want the story officially or unofficially, sir?" cautiously asked Weston, with a sly grin.

"Unofficially, of course," was the prompt answer. "Under the circumstances it would hardly do to take official notice of the events. Take a chair and fire away."

Weston promptly complied. In contrast to Bryan the inspector possessed a vivid and fertile imagination, and when Weston had finished he was weak with laughter. During the recital he had, to relieve his feelings, alternately protested that Weston would some day be the cause of his early death, and that he would one day be the star performer at a hanging bee if he got his deserts.

"What are your plans for the remainder of your leave?" inquired the inspector when sanity once more reigned in the office.

"I don't know as yet, sir. I may go down to Winnipeg and start studying high life. I understand that the flowers of youth and fashion congregate for tea-dances and things. And I'm curious to see how they manage to keep alive in direct contradiction to the law about the survival of the fittest. And, besides, I'm commencing to feel social ambitions. I want to pick up some of the wrinkles of how to juggle with a teacup, a plate and a girl's hand at the same time without disgracing myself. You see, I intend to educate myself, sir," he ended with a grin.

"Hop to it!" laughed the inspector. "And when you come back you will perhaps give lectures to the boys on correct and polite behaviour. A little polish won't do them any harm. Sure you don't intend to join the Blue Band and the Salvation Army while you are about it?"

"I may, sir, if the spirit moves me," grinned Weston. Whereupon he took his leave and departed.

Emerging on the street his face lost some of its cheer. He felt a little depressed. He was about of the opinion that his leave had been so utterly ruined that he might as well throw the remains into the discard and go and report for duty at once. However, he decided to go over to the local billiard parlor on Main Street and play a game of pool while waiting for some inspiration.

Arrived before his destination he cast sweeping glances up and down the street in the hope that he would espy some of his

particular cronies. Suddenly his roving glance became fixed to a lady who was standing looking into the window of a shop a little further up the street, and his face lit up.

The lady was Mrs. Allan Gunn, the wife of the manager at Revillon Frères' Post up at Beaver Narrows. And the Gunns he reckoned amongst his dearest friends.

"Holy smokes!" he muttered joyously to himself. "There is Mrs. Allen. Thank God for some sensible person to talk to. And I bet Allan himself is somewhere around too. Now, I call this luck!"

During his self-communion the lady had turned away from the shop-window and was strolling aimlessly up the street away from him, and he at once set off in pursuit. He slid along the boarded side-walk quickly and silently, his moccasined feet stepping almost noiselessly. He was going to give Mrs. Gunn a surprise. And the surprise succeeded far beyond his wildest expectations.

HAVING come within reach of his quarry he stretched out his arm and tapped her with a finger on the shoulder, a joyful grin on his face.

"Pee-bo!" he cried playfully.

The lady wheeled quickly, and Weston's grin was instantly ironed out, and its place was taken by an expression of frank, dismayed consternation and horror. He was looking into the amazed and outraged face of a complete stranger! Her big blue eyes were opened wide, and they stared at him as if the owner fully suspected him of being a lunatic at large.

Weston was confounded! There was something about the lady which vaguely reminded him of Mrs. Gunn, and he could quite see how he could have mistaken one for the other at a distance; but now, close up, he noticed that the likeness between the two was very faint. For one thing, the lady confronting him was much younger than Mrs. Gunn. She was hardly more than a girl.

The girl, on her part, saw before her a be-moccasined, clean-shaven young man, dressed in a rather disreputable suit of tweeds, the whole crowned by a battered old felt hat. But a closer look into his confounded face dispelled her first fears that she was dealing with a confirmed lunatic. And she vaguely wondered what had

caused the owner of that seemingly ant, though momentarily highly rased, face to succumb to a sudden apparent insanity.

This mutual scrutiny lasted only seconds, at the end of which Weston tore off his hat.

"I . . . I'm awfully sorry!" he muttered; still half-dazed and feeling utter fool, chump and idiot. "I've made a mistake. I took you for an acquaintance of mine; a Mrs. Gunn from Beaver Narrows. Confusing likeness, somehow. I really hope you'll forgive me!"

During his explanation the girl had commenced to lose its expression of outraged amazement, and by the time she had finished a dimple had commenced to show on each cheek. Suddenly she turned back her head and burst into a hearty laugh.

"How frightfully funny!" she breathed at last. "Mrs. Gunn is my sister, and I suppose there is some family likeness between us."

"Then you are Miss Elliott?" exclaimed Weston eagerly, his face clearing. "And certainly lifts a load off my chest, too. My name is Weston, by the way. I belong to the Mounted Police up here. Am I forgiven?"

"Of course you are. I think it was a very awful good joke," smiled the girl. "So you are Sergeant Weston? I heard a lot about you from my sister and Allan, so you are really old acquaintances in a way."

"Awfully decent of you to take it that way," said Weston relieved. "But what are you doing up here? Are Mrs. Gunn and Allan here too?"

Miss Elliott's face grew a shade paler.

"I'm on my way up to Beaver Narrows for a visit, and I expected my sister and Allan to meet me here. But so far they haven't shown up, nor have I received a message from them. I can't quite understand it."

"Did they know you were coming?"

"Oh, yes. I wrote to them and also sent a telegram informing them that I was coming my way. But perhaps they have been delayed for some reason or other, and won't turn up in a day or two."

Weston pondered for a moment, then he asked:

"How long is it since you sent the letter to them?"

informing them of your coming? And when did you dispatch your telegram? You see, the mails up to the trading-posts are rather uncertain and irregular," he explained. And the telegram also has to go up there by mail from here. The mail is only sent up when the chance offers, and it takes from four to five weeks to get to Beaver Narrows. So you see, it is quite possible that things have got balled up."

"My word! At that rate they may have received neither my letter nor my telegram!" cried the girl, dismayed. "I wrote about two months ago, and sent the telegram a fortnight ago."

"Well, we'll soon find out all about it," said Weston practically. "Please come along to the post office; and we'll soon find out about what time they would have received your letter up at Beaver Narrows. Your telegram, at least, would not have reached them early enough to be of practical value. But don't worry! We'll see that you get up there safely even if things have got tangled up."

Side by side they walked down the street and entered the unpretentious, two-story wooden building which housed His Majesty's mails.

Having entered the office Weston crossed to the counter, popped his head inside the wicket set in the frosted glass partition, and shouted cheerfully:

"Hello, Banting!"

"Hello, Sergeant!" came the answer from the other side of the partition. "I thought you were up at Clear Water?"

"Got homesick. But come over here, I want to pow-wow."

A grey head appeared in the opening. The face beamed at Weston and his companion in a friendly manner, and the sergeant quickly effected the necessary introductions.

"This is Miss Elliott, Banting. Miss Elliott is Mrs. Gunn's sister, Banting. She's going up to the Narrows, and expected the Gunns to meet her here. But there seems to have been some kind of hitch. How long is it since you sent up any mail to the Narrows?"

The post-master scratched his head.

"I reckon it is about two months ago," he said. "There hasn't been anybody down from the Narrows since then, and nobody's been going up; so I haven't had a chance to send up the mail."

"Then they probably won't know I'm on my way," cried the girl.

"It certainly looks that way," agreed the sergeant. "But we'll soon find out. Please let Miss Elliott have a look through the mail for the Narrows, Banting; then she can soon find out if her letter is still here."

"That's the idea," answered Banting, quitting the wicket, and turning to the letter-rack behind him. He removed a bulky package from one of the pigeon-holes, and returned with this to the counter. "Here you are, Miss Elliott. This is the mail that has accumulated for the Narrows. Please have a look through and see if any of your messages are included in the bunch."

She quickly went through the bundle, and soon held up a letter and telegram for their inspection.

"Here are both my letter and my telegram!" she exclaimed. "They never got any of them, and have no idea that I'm here!" For a minute or so she looked a little nonplussed; but suddenly she burst out laughing. "This is certainly a joke. If it had not been for you, Mr. Weston, I might have waited here till the grey hairs had commenced to sprout on my head."

"Hardly as long as that," muttered Weston, shooting a covert, but admiring, glance at the fair abundance crowning the girl's head.

"But what do I do now?" continued Miss Elliott.

"Don't you worry, miss," reassured Banting, his kindly face wrinkled in smiles. "The Police will see that you get up there safely. I won't deny that they are most a trial and nuisance to have around; but I admit they have their uses sometimes."

"Don't listen to the gentleman's libellous chatter, Miss Elliott!" laughed Weston. "Come along, and we'll try to make some arrangements."

"By the way, I suppose you are staying at the Palace?" asked Weston, when they were once more on the street.

"Yes. I went there when I arrived a couple of days ago."

"I suppose you know quite a few people in town?" continued Weston conversationally, as they walked in the direction of the hotel.

"Indeed I don't," answered his companion. "I don't know a soul here."

Weston stopped dead.

"DO YOU mean to say that you have been hanging around this burg and that dismal Palace on your lonesome for two days?" he queried.

"I have; and, as you see, have managed to survive," she smiled.

"This won't do! This won't do at all!" averred Weston firmly. "This state of things must be remedied at once! Please come along with me." And so saying he commenced crossing Main Street.

"Where are you taking me?" asked Miss Elliott curiously.

"I am taking you to Mrs. Trench. She is our inspector's wife, and one of the best."

"But I don't know her," she protested, "and can't break in on her like this."

"You will know her in about five minutes," grinned Weston. "And don't worry about breaking in on her. She likes it! She's a great friend of your sister's; and she'll gnash her teeth and pour ashes over her head when she hears that you've been here for more than two days without her having been aware of the fact."

"Are you sure she won't roll on the floor and bite the furniture?" laughed Miss Elliott?

"I wouldn't be surprised if she does!"

They were quite a gay couple who presented themselves at the inspector's bungalow. Weston had been considerably impressed with the manner in which the girl had taken what must have been a distinct shock. It would have been enough to upset anybody to travel all the way from Toronto, expecting to be met at the journey's end, only to find out that one was stranded, and alone, in what did not amount to much more than a frontier town. But she had accepted the situation more humorously than otherwise; and he admired her for it.

Mrs. Trench was exceedingly sympathetic when she was informed about Miss Elliott's predicament. And her contrition at the lack of hospitality extended to her so far, took the practical form of a firm invitation, which brooked no opposition, that she take up her abode under her roof for the remainder of her stay in town.

Inspector Trench soon arrived and at once voiced his hearty approval of his wife's arrangements so far; and they immediately went into session to discuss ways and means of how to get Miss Elliott to her destination. The discussion was brief

and to the point. The inspector opened the proceedings with this profound quotation: "Well, what about it, Sergeant?"

"The same idea has already occurred to me, sir. And I think it would be a singular scheme," promptly answered the sergeant with a smile.

"That's settled, then!" remarked the inspector with finality and obvious satisfaction.

Miss Elliott looked from one to the other, unable to catch the drift of the cryptic utterances, and even Mrs. Trench looked puzzled.

"I don't doubt that your remarks were quite clear to the average intellect," smiled the former, "but I'm forced to admit to me they appear just a trifle vague."

The two officers laughed, and the inspector took upon himself to explain:

"I don't blame you for being puzzled. I am afraid that even a thought-reader would have found it difficult to discover enough of a skeleton on which to hang a body in sketchy remarks. The solution of the riddle is simply this: I suggested that the sergeant take you up to Beaver Narrows and he was in hearty and immediate agreement. Weston is on leave just now, and time is hanging heavily on his hands. He was just praying for a job of work to take up. He was so disgusted this morning that he actually mumbled something about joining the Salvation Army to get some action. Isn't that right, Sergeant?"

"Quite correct, sir," grinned Weston.

"But I can't really put you to all that trouble, Mr. Weston!" cried Miss Elliott. "Especially when you are on leave."

"Don't you worry, Miss Elliott," broke in the inspector with twinkling eyes. "Weston likes pottering about in the wilderness. And, anyhow, his leave is up in four or five weeks, so part of his trip will be stolen from him. Besides, he also hinted this morning that he might take a trip to Winnipeg; and I don't really like to inflict an uncouth, rough man of the North on the respectable and unsuspecting community. So, you see, you are really doing a kindness towards society in general by taking him along."

The girl looked at the grinning sergeant. "Are you really sure you won't be put to any inconvenience?"

"Positive! My esteemed friend Angus MacKenzie, and I will get you up to the Narrows safely and painlessly in no time

“And who is Mr. MacKenzie? Is he a quack?”

A roar of laughter greeted her innocent query; and the inspector hastily expounded the angus's national status, racial extraction and peculiarities, and Angus's own views on the matter to Miss Elliott to explain their hilarity.

“But,” he continued, “Weston and Angus are about the best canoe-men in the country, so you will be in safe hands.”

The details for the trip were next settled. Miss Elliott suggested that they leave on the following morning; but this proposal was energetically vetoed by Mrs. Trench, supported by her husband. Mrs. Trench insisted that she stay at least three or four days, to give her an opportunity to make amends for her former neglect of her, as he expressed it. After some good-natured wrangling it was at last decided that they were to start for Beaver Narrows on the following Monday. That would give Miss Elliott four clear days' stay in the town.

When all was eventually settled Weston set out to find Angus to give that gentleman the necessary instructions for the forthcoming trip.

As he strolled down the streets towards the bridge across to the reserve where Angus had his habitat, his recent sad and mournful experiences up at Clear Water Lake came back to him with a rush. Events had moved so swiftly for the last couple of hours, and his brains had been kept so busy trying to solve Miss Elliott's troubles, that his own had been crowded into the background for the while.

But as the memory of that last deplorable evening on the lake came back to him, he was inclined to kick himself for a chump. The incident had inspired him with a deep distrust and suspicion of girls in general, and now he had deliberately gone and committed himself to be squire to another damsel. However, he tried to console himself, Miss Elliott had seemed particularly friendly, unaffected and cheerful, so perhaps the affair might turn out all right after all. And besides, it was his simple duty as a friend of the Gunns to assist the girl in her present predicament. Anyhow, the matter was settled, so it was impossible to back out of it now. But his former joy at the satisfactory way in which the disposal of the remainder of his leave had been settled for him had been seriously eclipsed by vague distrust and forebodings. You never

know what might happen when you mix with girls, he thought with a mournful shake of his head. But, he decided, the only thing to do was to hope for the best; but be prepared for the worst.

They started early on Monday morning.

The weather gods seemed to smile on them from the start. The morning was lovely. The broad Saskatchewan was shimmering like a mirror in the morning sun, and even the usually austere spruce-forest looked friendly. And those left behind agreed that the travellers would have an agreeable and pleasant trip.

But five days later the inspector, for one, got shaken in his conviction. On that day he received a communication from Headquarters in Prince Albert, which made him send Corporal Wilson and Alec Chaboye—the half-breed guide attached to the Detachment—post haste on the trail of Weston, with orders to cut down rest and sleep to a minimum till they had got in touch with him.

CHAPTER XIV

IN the meantime Weston and his companions had been pushing steadily northwards toward Beaver Narrows. For the first few days Weston eyed Miss Elliott warily, as if she were something in the nature of a dangerous infernal machine; but as nothing in her attitude seemed to indicate even the remotest trace of any hidden explosives, he soon forgot his fears, and became once more his natural, cheery self.

As a matter of fact, as time went on Miss Elliott not alone managed to put to shame his most pessimistic thoughts; but she actually helped to raise his general opinion of the opposite sex, which had recently been a little impaired.

Although this was her first trip into the wilderness, Miss Elliott seemed to slip into the life of trail and camp with an ease and quiet confidence which surprised and delighted her companions. From the first day she had insisted on wielding a paddle instead of confining herself to being a mere passenger. And Weston's unspoken prophecy, that her toil would cease promptly with the appearance of the first blister, and at the first spasm of fatigue and aches in back and arms, was decisively disproved. She laughed at fatigue and aches, simply

pricked the blisters with a needle and stuck on a bit of plaster, and carried on.

Even Angus was impressed. He, whose pet characteristic of a particularly clumsy cheechako up to then had been: "Heem behave like heem white squaw!" even he began to beam approvingly on her.

Miss Elliott also insisted on taking her turn carrying loads across the portages. At first she was inclined to consider the portage strap a particularly disagreeable instrument of torture, and "packing on the head" a procedure which could easily have been put in a class with the most cheerful inventions of the Inquisition. She admitted that her neck felt as if it were broken; but she persevered. And gradually the pain in her neck disappeared, and she was able to increase her loads without experiencing any inconvenience. Soon she was swinging along the portages in the wake of Weston and Angus with quite hefty packs.

She further insisted on being initiated into the more subtler mysteries of camp cooking. She soon mastered the art of making bannock and soda-biscuits in a frying-pan; of making flap-jacks, and flipping them scientifically over in the pan by a deft twist of her wrist; and of grilling fish Indian fashion.

Gradually, as she became a fair exponent of the various arts peculiar to camp cooking, she began to take sole charge of the kitchen department. As soon as they had picked out a site a fire was at once built for her, the grub-box and cooking utensils were set out near the fire; and she fell to while Weston and Angus ran up the camp.

And when supper was over for the night, the males having successfully filled the bill as scullery-maids during the final rites, she loved to sit by the camp-fire, while the shadows in the dense forest around them deepened into dusk, and listen to the two men talk about the north and life up there.

And Weston found it quite easy to talk unreservedly to her. That was, of course, after he had got over his first panicky fear of provoking a back-fire by venturing an opinion.

Miss Elliott and Weston had soon fallen into the habit of calling each other by Christian names. The cause of this speedy intimacy was Angus's ideas on proper social intercourse. On the first day of the trip he had asked the girl:

"What's your name?"

"Miss Elliott," she had answered, a little surprised.

"No me mean, what they call you at home."

"Oh! Betty."

"Good," nodded Angus, and she henceforth became "Betty" to him.

And Weston found the practice comical. His first attempts had been merely of the tongue, caused by listening to Angus free and easy mode of address. But Betty laughingly had assured him that he did not mind a bit, he took heart and carelessly let the slips develop into habit. When she, also taking her cue from Angus, commenced to address him as "Wess," firmly put down his foot.

"Now look here, please!" he protested energetically. "I've always objected to that nickname. Please call me Dick. Only your sister has the good sense to call me by my name. Those other idiots have saddled me with that other horror, and I'm afraid I'm stuck," he sighed resignedly.

In the afternoon of the ninth day, as they were traversing one of the numerous lakes which were strung along the way, of course like beads on a string, they were struck by one of those sudden, violent storms which periodically scourge the north during the latter part of the summer months and early fall.

The day had broken clear and warm, but towards noon the heat had commenced to become oppressive and sticky, and the activities of the bull-flies had increased in intensity. During their lunch-break Weston and Angus voiced the opinion that they were in for a storm. But as the place where they were having their midday siesta was rather low and swampy and not fit for a camp-site, they decided to push across the lake which was just ahead of them, and camp up somewhere on the northern shore where the ground was good.

But the storm beat them. They were stranded in the middle of the lake, with some thirty miles separating them from their objective when they had the first indications that the storm was imminent.

THE forerunners of the approaching tempest were innocent enough—merely a few puffs of chill wind, which commenced to ripple and agitate the placid surface of the lake. But behind the tree-tops on the eastern shore ugly, blue-black, it

ed, aular clouds began to mass and spread
wards over the blue sky.

On the first puff of wind the course of
canoe had been altered, and they were
w paddling for the east shore, about
the height into the teeth of the approaching
le. Weston had warned Betty to sit tight
then the sorm should strike them, and,
rther, to use her paddle on the port side
ly.

They were still about a mile from the
ore when the tempest struck them. They
uld follow its approach. The serene,
lemn forest ahead of them was suddenly
rred into a mass of wildly swaying and
ssing tree-tops and branches, and then the
ast hit the lake and swept towards them,
eceded by a skirmishing line of white
am.

The first furious gust all but took their
eath away, and left them gasping; but
ey bent to their paddles and began to
orce their way slowly against the shrieking
ind. The formerly quiet lake was soon a
mass of tossing waves, and the spreading
ark clouds rapidly blotted out the sun,
aving the landscape dark and dismal.

Up in the north-west streaks of lightning
were zig-zagging down the clouds, and the
volumbling thunder quickly gained in vol-
ume, and soon crashed and thundered al-
er most incessantly till the din was all but
ar-splitting.

"Are you scared?" shouted Weston, who
nervas paddling stern, to Betty, who was
eated in the middle of the canoe, just in
sront of him.

"No!" she flung back over her shoulder,
t revealing a segment of a smiling face,
ace flushed with healthy excitement. "I think
y st's fun!" Whereupon she turned her face
fit away and once more applied herself with
rest to her paddle.

As they were nearing the shore the wind
abated somewhat; but as if the weather-
gods were repenting on this concession and
e wanted to even matters, it began to pour
with rain. It was not a drizzle; but a steady
downpour, more as if a cascade was unin-
terruptedly playing down over their heads.
And the murky atmosphere darkened still
more, only split at times by dazzling flashes
of lightning.

The three were soaked through in a
moment; and the canoe, which had so far
ridden the turbulent lake without shipping
any water, thanks to Weston's and Angus's

skilful handling of the canoe, now stood in
serious danger of being swamped.

But their craft grated against the beach
before the last named calamity was really
overhanging; and the three bedraggled
travellers climbed ashore.

Betty glanced at her two companions in
distress and burst out laughing.

"We might as well have swum ashore,"
she cried gaily. "We could hardly have
got any wetter."

"You clear out of here!" commanded
Weston with a grin. "And get to shelter
under the nearest tree while Angus and I
salve our luggage."

"Shan't!" she countered mutinously. "I
can't get more soaked than I am already;
and the more hands, the quicker we'll get
the stuff out of the wet."

Even as she was speaking she had made
a dive for the canoe, which Weston and
Angus had drawn up on the beach, had
grabbed a bedding-roll, and with her spoil
she sprinted for the shelter under the
spreading boughs of a big spruce-tree.

By their combined efforts they soon had
all their effects comparatively safely stored
away under the friendly branches of the
spruce.

"That was certainly a whizzer!" com-
mented Weston, having dumped the last
bundle, as he gazed out on the inhospitable
scenery.

"A howler!" qualified Angus.

"Now, Angus and I are going to put up
your tent," continued Weston, addressing
Betty. "And in the meantime, you'll please
put on a coat and stick under this tree.
And no more mutiny! And if you don't
obey orders Angus and I will tie you to
this tree!" he threatened with a grin.

"Oh! I suppose I'll have to be good
then, just to avoid being manhandled by
you two hulking roughnecks," she answered,
with an impudent smile.

The tent was soon put up in spite of the
handicap the rain imposed on them; and by
some dexterous conjuring they even man-
aged to light a big fire in front of the open-
ing, the flaps of which were left wide open
to let in the heat.

"There you are," said Weston as he
and Angus returned to the tree to fetch
Betty's effects. "All snug and comfy. Come
along and change your wet clothes in a
hurry. Angus and I'll retire some distance

down the beach to leave you all the privacy you want."

"Very well, sir!" smiled Betty.

While she was changing her soaked garments the rain gradually eased up, and at last stopped. Through the tent-opening she could see the dark, heavy clouds roll slowly away towards the west, leaving in their wake a clear blue sky.

The wind, however, which had held its breath during the downpour of rain, now took a new lease on life and started with renewed vigor, sweeping with shrieks of fury through the tops of the groaning trees.

Having at last successfully finished her toilet, and feeling wonderfully refreshed, she stretched a line between two trees, and put her discarded wet clothing on it to dry.

Then she strolled forth to hunt for her companions. She found them a good half-mile down the shore.

They were lolling comfortably under a tree, pipes in mouth, a big fire in front of them, over which was slung the inevitable kettle.

They straightened up as they became aware of the girl.

"Hello! Changed already? That was certainly quick work," complimented Weston.

Instead of answering Betty contemplated the two for a few moments, a frown of disapproval gathering on her brow.

"Look here! Haven't you fellows changed yet?" she demanded abruptly.

Two pairs of surprised eyes met her own.

"Changed?" queried Weston.

"Hugh?" from Angus.

"Yes. I mean changed. And if you don't know the word I'll spell it for you. Do you mean that you are still sitting about in your wet clothes?"

"We never change our clothes after a little rainstorm; but let them dry on the body," explained Weston with an uneasy smile. "They dry quite quickly. They are almost dry already."

"Sure!" supported Angus.

SHE looked at the couple with withering scorn; and they wriggled uneasily, feeling hopelessly guilty.

"You certainly are a couple of chumps!" she said at last. "For two grown men you show as much sense as new-born babes. You certainly ought not to be let out on

your own; but ought to have a nunny fr along to look after you. And I suppose you get rheumatism or something vere like that, you'll be lost in innocent unde over how you caught it. Now off y the both of you, with your kit-bags, and in my tent. And when I say chapman mean c-h-a-n-g-e! So hop off, my darlings. In the meantime I'll make real strong coffee and grub."

"Oh, but I say!" stammered Watson dismayed. "We . . . we can't barge a young lady's tent like this, you know."

"Oh, fiddlesticks! It won't outrage a young lady's feelings, if that's what's bothering you. And if you are so bashful about the mere idea of invading a young lady's domain causes rosy blushes to mount, B your youthful cheeks, they'll have to mount. That won't kill you! Now, good-bye. Both of you. At once!"

Correctly sensing that further argument would be futile, the two offenders grinned feebly. And they sheepishly slouched away in the direction of the tent, carefully avoiding looking at each other.

In due course of time Weston and Angus returned, looking, perhaps, a shade sheepish than when they departed under the mellowing influence of coffee and a substantial meal they soon regained their mental equilibrium.

"What do we do now?" inquired Angus as the meal was over.

"Nothing," grinned Weston. "We're taking a holiday. The wind will keep us here three or four days if it runs true to form, and during that time it'll be hopeless to travel. So we'll make ourselves comfortable. We'll fix an extra special good spruce in your tent, and Angus and I'll rig up a lean-to for ourselves from some of the tarpaulins. And after that we'll let the gale blow itself out."

"I see. No, I suppose it would be rather than futile to try and push ahead in the wind. I never thought the lakes up there could be so rough. Some of those boats out there looked as big as small houseboats."

"And even so, we didn't really get the cream of the show," laughed Weston. "We'd been nearer the opposite shore when the gale struck us, you would have encountered some switch-back."

"That reminds me. Why did you throw the canoe into the gale? It seems to

it would have been easier to have run
nursery from it."

Easier; but infinitely more hazardous,"
hinged Weston. "If one of those waves
ent under the stern of a canoe, chances are
off y that the bow would bury itself in the
and; and it would mean a swim for the
chapants. And besides, the beach on the
mylward side of the lake is only one mass
lake breakers on a day like this, so a canoe
ld stand every chance of being reduced
d watch-wood if you tried a landing. The
barger way to handle a canoe in a gale is
knead her straight into the wind, and
utrall ride comfortably without running the
nat'ger of being swamped. It's certainly
shft harder way; but far the safest."

During the days of their enforced idlem-
ness, Betty and Weston roamed around in
ha woods. Occasionally Angus accom-
panied them; but mostly he preferred to
y around the camp and enjoy his lei-
argued ease.

During these days Betty learnt a lot
ut the work of the Police up in that
that of the world. Up to now, she had
otked upon the members of the Mounted
ice as merely stern, uncompromising
ckers of evil-doers; but listening to the
geant she commenced to understand that
scope of their activities was far broader.
She learnt that not alone had the handful
men to maintain law and order in that
et territory; but they had also to play
vidence and guardian angel to those
o chose to inhabit it. And of those the
ians needed most attention, not alone
ause they were the most numerous; but
t as much owing to their particular
perament.

When an Indian has managed to make
specially intricate tangle of his affairs,
rough his uselessness and laziness he will
variably sit back and view the confusion
th a kind of mild, childish wonder, while
uiting for someone to come along and
travel the knots for him. And that some-
ine would in most cases be some member
up the Police.

Betty was also told about long, arduous
seeks into the wilderness in the middle of
ge frozen, cruel winter, when the travellers
are frequently lashed by the stinging, cut-
ng fury of the blizzards, to bring succour
trappers, prospectors and others who
ed come to grief up in that white land of
lence. And as she listened she began to

realize that even these altruistic duties of
the Police were fraught with hard toil and
hazards.

But as far as she could judge from the
sergeant the toilers themselves only seemed
to regard their hard work and hazardous
patrols as frolicsome, entertaining adven-
ture—the more hazardous the merrier.

From Weston's stories, supplemented by
information gathered from Angus, she com-
menced to get a true index to his character.
She began to realize that underneath his
perpetual easy, almost indolent, good-
nature and nonchalance was hidden deter-
mination, resourcefulness and a resolute
will.

"Is it true, what is generally said, that
the Police always get their man?" she in-
quired on one occasion.

Weston laughed.

"I'M AFRAID the statement is grossly
exaggerated. I must admit, however,
that given a reasonably fair trail our efforts
have generally been crowned with some
success. But occasionally it happens that
the criminals make themselves scarce be-
fore we even know they've been naughty;
and by the time we start getting busy,
they've covered their tracks so well that
it is often impossible to pick them up. Then,
again, it happens occasionally that the fugi-
tive manages to outwit us. But that, I
must admit, doesn't happen very often.
And then, of course, it happens that the
stalked gets the stalker."

"But that doesn't happen frequently,
does it?"

"Not very. Most of the law-breakers
know that such tactics invariably cause them
future grief," answered Weston grimly. "So
they seldom try it, unless they are particu-
larly wanting in intelligence, or are mad-
men. We had an ugly case in point only
last winter. An Indian up near Lac du
Broche had been a bit balmy; but gradu-
ally he began to take violent objection to
people around him for no apparent reason.
And he got into the habit of punctuating
his objections with pot-shots. As he was
well on the way of becoming a nuisance his
surroundings naturally grew a little peeved;
and they warned our people. A constable
was sent up at once, with orders to secure
the man and take him down to the asylum
in Prince Albert.

"But the wily lunatic must have got to

know of the constable's visit in some way or other. Anyhow, on the day the constable arrived, he had hidden himself in some brush near his shack; and he shot our man through the back as he was about to open the door."

"Did he kill him?"

"Unfortunately, yes. He shot him right through the heart."

"And what happened to the madman?" she questioned, shuddering a little in spite of herself.

"Well, I managed to collect the erring sheep a month later."

"How did you do it? Please tell me all about it," exclaimed Betty eagerly.

"There is nothing much to tell. I took Angus along, and we went up to his haunts. He had hidden out somewhere by then, of course; and for some time it was impossible for us to locate his exact hiding-place. The Indians regard a madman as a kind of holy man, so we couldn't hope for much assistance from them. But one day the lunatic committed an indiscretion. He happened to take objection to a relative of his, who came along to pay him a friendly visit. The objection was at once followed by the usual demonstration, of course, which the relative considered a bit thick. In high dudgeon he came straight to me and gave away the location of the hiding-place; so Angus and I got busy at once, and went and collected the playful lunatic."

"And what happened when you found him?" queried his audience a little impatiently, when Weston showed signs of considering the tale told. "I mean, the fellow surely didn't receive you as a long lost brother, and fall around your neck. Did he?"

"Not exactly," grinned Weston. "As a matter of fact, his actions seemed to indicate that he grew considerably peeved when we trickled on to the scene. Or so I judged. Because he perforated a perfectly good Stetson hat of mine with his artillery. It looked like a collander by the time he was through playing with it, after having wasted a scandalous lot of ammunition."

"But how perfectly dreadful! You ought to consider yourself awfully lucky that he did not hit your head and kill you on the spot," exclaimed Betty.

"Lucky nothing," answered Weston more cheerful than ever. "That wasn't luck; but strategy. You see my head was nowhere

near my hat. The hat was simply torn from a stick which Angus pushed in the grass, while he himself was sheltered behind a particularly hefty trunk. Every time our Indian friend caught a glimpse of my hat, he got excited and fired; whereupon Angus promptly shot a hole in the air as a quittance for the trespass. And the more the hat was around, the more ambitious grew the fellow, with Angus answering shot for shot. Well, while the two were busy at each other, I circled around through the wood and sneaked up on the fellow from the rear. He was so busy exchanging antries with Angus that he didn't know he was anywhere near before I had flung myself on his back. Then Angus joined in the merry scrimmage, and we had the fellow securely bound in a trice. And he brought him to Prince Albert and hid him in the lunatic asylum, where the fellow still lingers."

"I suppose he wasn't particularly friendly disposed towards you for catching him?"

"Not very," sighed Weston. "Although I exerted all my personal charm to produce a more cordial and chummy intercourse between us, he left me with the impression that he considered me about the outside edge of everything nasty. But let's drop this painful topic. See, the sun is down. Let's go down to the shore and catch some shrimps."

"We might as well, seeing that he obviously intend to play oyster," laughed Betty. "Come on, I'll race you! And he was off like the wind towards the little sheltered bay which was their nightly hunting ground for the little crustaceans."

They spent a delightful hour paddling around in the warm water; and they cleverly dislodged the wriggling shrimps from beneath submerged rocks and shells and dropped them in tin cans partially filled with water. That their sleeves were wet right up to the shoulder in no way detracted from their enjoyment; and they were a merry couple who eventually marched proudly back to camp, each with a tin nearly full of shrimps.

They all enjoyed themselves so well in their temporary camp that it caused them almost a pang of disappointment when the wind died down towards the evening of the third day. And when they continued the

interrupted trip on the following morning. He felt a little as if they were leaving the old Homestead to sally forth into an inhospitable and hostile world.

THREE days later, in the afternoon, when they were crossing a small lake, Angus suddenly commenced to sniff the atmosphere suspiciously, as a light puff of wind, blowing out to them from the heavily-timbered south shore, struck the canoe. He detected a faint, but unmistakable, odor of burning wood on the breeze. He scanned the shore carefully; but nowhere could he detect any indication of a fire. He knew there were no human habitations around that lake; and as there were no canoes to be seen anywhere on the beach, nobody could be camping in there. Perhaps there was a forest fire somewhere to the south of them, too far away to be actually seen, but near enough for that little whiff of smoke to have been carried up to them on the breeze. That was perhaps it. But the explanation did not quite satisfy him. He hated puzzles without any definite solution. He had found that an unsolved riddle might hide danger.

As they paddled along he often threw long, searching glances backwards towards the woods; but he could detect nothing which might have any bearing on the puzzle.

But if his eyes could have penetrated some fifty yards into the dense undergrowth he would have been enlightened.

By a fire, which had burnt down to glowing embers, was seated an Indian, leaning up against a canoe, which was lying bottom up on the ground. His features, with the close-set eyes, bore an expression of malevolent cunning; and there was a bestial cruelty stamped over the whole face, which seemed to exclude the existence of any normally human feelings in its owner.

As soon as the faint splashes from the passing canoe reached his ears he flattened himself on the ground, and wriggled carefully and noiselessly forward, till he had a view of the craft from behind a screen of bushes.

As soon as his eyes fell on its occupants his face contorted with wild, passionate fury. Quickly he wriggled back to his camp, grabbed a rifle, and again pushed forward to his previous point of vantage. He raised

his rifle to his shoulder; paused; hesitated; and then again lowered it. A cunning leer suddenly flashed across his features; he raised his hand and shook it at the departing canoe, while he mumbled something to himself. Then he turned around and wriggled back to his camp.

About half an hour later Weston's party turned into a broad, smooth river. After having paddled up this river for a short distance Angus suggested to pitch camp in an inviting green glade which they were just passing.

"But hang it, Angus!" protested Weston, staring, "it is too early to camp yet. Why, the afternoon is only half gone."

"This best place to camp for many miles," answered Angus. "Will be very late night before coming to other good camping-place."

Weston looked thoughtfully at Angus. He knew his statement was not in strict accordance with the truth; but at the same time he knew that Angus never made an idle suggestion. And he wondered.

It was Betty who settled the question.

"Oh, yes! Let's camp here. This spot looks just lovely. And we are not in any particular hurry, are we?" she exclaimed with a smile. That remark killed any further objections from Weston, of course; and the bow of the canoe was turned towards the clearing, which stretched right down to the water.

As soon as everything was in order, and a merry fire was going, Angus grabbed his rifle and prepared to depart.

"Hello, Angus!" exclaimed Weston. "Where are you off to with your rifle?"

"Go for walk. Perhaps fin' jumpin'-deer," answered Angus.

"But, you mutt, you won't find any jumping-deer around here!"

"Mebbe so. Me see," and with those words he commenced walking along the river-bank, in the direction from whence they had come; and he soon disappeared in the woods.

Angus had no intention to look for jumping-deer. He did not know exactly what he was looking for. But he was filled with vague suspicions. He had smelt a fire where no fire was in evidence; and his strongly-developed instinct warned him that no suspicious signs, be they ever so trivial, ought to be ignored or lightly dismissed. So he had decided to scout around

over their back-tracks, and see what he could see.

He walked rapidly along the river-bank, just far enough back in the brush to be screened from possible observers on the river, his eyes dodging ahead of him for possible signs.

Having made a short cut across a bend a couple of miles below the camp he stopped dead. Drawn up on the beach, just ahead of him, was a derelict canoe!

Without wasting time on further investigations he turned around and sprinted straight for camp.

CHAPTER XV

FOLLOWING Angus's departure for parts unknown Betty and Weston sat chatting by the fire. Owing to the early break they had not yet commenced preparing supper. Of course a kettle of water had been slung over the fire; but purely as a reflex-movement.

Betty was principally leading the conversation, while Weston's contributions to the feast of reason and flow of soul were meagre, and half absent-minded. He was frankly puzzled. He held no clue to Angus's somewhat mysterious movements; but he knew enough of Angus to commence feeling uneasy when that gentleman chose to become mysterious.

Often his eyes would stray towards the point where Angus had disappeared; whereupon they would describe an arc around the fringe of the clearing. In the middle of one of those sweeping glances he suddenly stiffened — and immediately Betty had several shocks at once.

Weston's arm shot out like lightning, and his hand struck her shoulder so hard that it sent her sprawling to the ground. At the same moment she heard a thud beside her, and almost in the same breath the sharp report of a rifle. Dazed and shaken, almost in a detached way, she saw the sergeant's body crumple up and sag to the ground, and at the same moment she heard another report; and from behind a tree-trunk, some fifty yards away, the body of a man fell sideways, a rifle dropping from his nerveless hand as he slid to the ground. Next she discovered Angus coming running from a point farther back in the woods, his rifle ready in his hand. She saw him stop for a few seconds looking down

at the huddled man under the tree, a wild ferocity distorting his usually placid countenance; then he bent quickly down over the body. After a short examination he straightened up with an expression of grim satisfaction on his face, and strode rapidly across to her.

By now she had recovered to the degree that she was sitting up, watching the huddled body beside her with horror-dilated eyes staring out from her white face.

"What has happened?" she whispered to Angus through trembling lips.

"Mad Injun shoot. Bad man! The one sergeant tell you about one day. Was in mad-house; not know how he get here!" explained Angus succinctly, as he knelt down by the sergeant. He straightened the inert body out on its back, felt pulse and heart, and then grunted.

"Is he . . . is he . . . dead?" stammered Betty, tremulously and fearfully.

"No, alive an' kickin'!" answered Angus with a faint smile flitting across his dark features.

"And the . . . other man?"

"Dead!" came the brief answer with grim satisfaction.

She threw a shuddering look across at the dead man, then her gaze returned to the sergeant. On his shirt an ominous red patch was steadily growing. It appeared to her frightened glance as if the stain was alarmingly close to the heart.

Angus got up and hurriedly walked over to the grub-box, returning immediately with a bundle. This contained Weston's emergency kit, without which he never travelled.

Betty had now managed to shake off her first daze of horror; and when Angus unrolled the bundle, and the bandages and other paraphernalia lay revealed, she exclaimed eagerly:

"Let me help bandaging him, Angus! I know quite a bit about bandaging wounds!"

"Good," grunted Angus, getting up and lifting the kettle—which had been bubbling merrily on, totally unaffected by the tragedy enacted—off the fire, and returned with this and a basin.

Between them they carefully cut away the shirt and bared his left breast. They found that the bullet had entered above his left lung, had passed cleanly through, without touching any bones, and had come out just below the left shoulder-blade.

The discovery caused Angus to grunt his

satisfaction, and his face cleared a little.

When they had carefully washed away the blood with warm water, in which a quantity of boracic powder had been dissolved, Betty discovered an old healed scar near the fresh wound.

"What is that, Angus?" she asked, pointing.

"Sergeant got shot by bohunk down in Portage Junction once," exclaimed Angus indifferently; and she shuddered. She commenced to realize that Weston's life had been even less of a sinecure than she had been given to understand.

Having washed the wounds, they sprinkled them with boracic powder and bandaged a pad firmly over each; Weston remaining unconscious throughout the operation.

"He isn't in . . . any danger?" she asked a little fearfully, when the operation was finished.

Angus stared at her incredulously.

"Danger? Him? From little hole like him had? Not much!" he quoth firmly with a touch of contempt. "Takes more 'an just one little hole to kill Wess! Him be little sick, perhaps. But not much, me not think," he added as an after-thought.

They next put his bedding in Betty's tent, carefully lifted him between them, and carried him on to the prepared bed, both endeavoring to make him as comfortable as possible.

Presently Weston sighed and opened his eyes. For a moment he gazed a little vaguely at the two bending over him, then his eyes circled slowly round the canvas walls and roof surrounding him. Bringing his eyes back to the girl he asked slowly and laboriously:

"Why . . . am I . . . in your tent . . . Betty?"

"Hush, you mustn't talk," reproved Betty gently. "You are wounded, and must keep still. That's why we put you in here."

"I know . . . I am . . . wounded," continued Weston, making a ghastly effort to grin. "I saw . . . his . . . gun . . . pointing at . . . me. Who . . . was he?"

"Little Otter from Broche," explained Angus.

"The lunatic. Must . . . have got . . . away from . . . the asylum. What happened . . . to him?"

"I shot him. Killed him," answered Angus shortly.

"Poor chap!" mumbled Weston. "We must . . . discuss . . . what to . . . do now."

"You are not to do any more talking!" interrupted Betty with determination. "Don't worry about the future or anything else. Angus and I will arrange all that."

Weston pondered for a while.

"I am . . . sorry . . . to have . . . become . . . such a . . . nuisance . . ." he commenced; but Betty again interrupted.

"Don't talk like that, please!" she cried with a catch in her voice. "And please be quiet, and rest! Would you like some water?"

"Please!"

Angus went out, returning in a few moments with a mug, and Weston greedily drank some of its contents. The water seemed to refresh him, for he immediately began to give utterance to a fresh train of thought.

"I say . . . Betty, I can't . . . stay . . . in here. Where . . . are you . . . to sleep . . . then?"

"Oh, please don't worry. I am going to sleep right here; and I am going to nurse you. Don't talk!" she ordered hurriedly, as Weston showed signs of breaking out again. "I know what you are going to say. But under conditions like these, conventions automatically cease to exist."

A faint smile flitted across Weston's drawn face; but he kept silent. Presently he closed his eyes.

"We had better leave him for a while," whispered Betty to Angus. "Then, perhaps, he will fall asleep."

"You wait here," whispered Angus in return. "I got somethin' to do. I call you, when you come out."

SHE looked inquiringly at him; but suddenly understanding came to her with a rush. For the moment she had forgotten that sprawling body under the tree out there. Of course, Angus wanted to remove that horror from sight before she came out. And she felt grateful, as well as surprised, at his thoughtfulness and delicacy of feeling.

"Very well," she said quietly, seating herself on her own bedding, while Angus quitted the tent.

Weston lay quite still, seemingly dozing; and as she watched him, her hands clasped in her lap, tears commenced to well up in her eyes.

Up till now things had moved so swiftly that she had had no time to think of anything but the needs of the moment; but now, when she was sitting idle, the reaction began to set in, and she saw the tragedy in all its grim nakedness.

Only a short hour ago the sergeant had been virile, active—bubbling over with glorious life; and now . . . Would he die? she thought in sudden panic. Oh, God! not that. He was lying there so quietly, and his face was so pale and drawn. Angus seemed to have been so assured that there was no danger; but was Angus a thoroughly competent judge?

She recovered herself with a start; and with an angry shake of her head she dashed the tears from her eyes. This was no time for letting herself slip! She must face the situation bravely, and not be a silly, weak-kneed idiot, she reproved herself sternly.

Shee pulled out her handkerchief and energetically dried her eyes.

How long she sat there she did not know. At intervals Weston would stir slightly, and would mumble a few words which she was unable to catch; but apart from that they sat in silence.

At last Angus carefully parted the tent-flaps, and stuck in his head. He glanced at the sergeant and nodded his satisfaction; and then beckoned to her to come out.

Carefully she got up and followed him outside. She threw a quick, shuddering glance over to the place where she had last seen the dead Indian; but as she had already surmised, the body had disappeared.

"We eat now," said Angus in a matter-of-fact voice, nodding towards the fire. On one side of it a tarpaulin had been spread, on which had been placed cups, plates, a frying-pan with freshly fried bacon and beans, a plateful of flap-jacks, bannock butter and jam. And the kettle belched forth a pleasant aroma of coffee.

"Oh! Have you done the cooking already, Angus?"

"Sure!"

"That isn't fair. However, I don't think I could eat anything just yet."

"Must eat! Can't do nothin' on empty belly!" answered Angus, practically and elegantly.

She had to smile in spite of herself.

"All right! I'll try."

They sat down by the tarpaulin, and to her surprise Betty discovered that she was ravenously hungry, and that she was able

to do full justice to the sumptuous repast once she had got started.

During the progress of the meal Angus frequently got up, tip-toed softly up to the tent and peeped inside; and on his return from each of these trips he could report that the patient was still sleeping.

When they had finished their supper Angus poured some oatmeal into a kettle of water which was hanging over the fire.

"Food for Wess when him wake," he explained in answer to the girl's questioning look. "Makin' oatmeal soup. Ver' good for sick people. Oatmeal is right stuff for us Scotchmen."

Only by exerting all her willpower did Betty save herself from committing a breach of etiquette; and to guide her thoughts into less frivolous channels she asked:

"What are we going to do now, Angus?"

Angus looked at her for a few moments as if appraising her.

"You think you can stay here one, mebbe two, days along of Wess alone?" he asked at last.

She was struck with a feeling of dismayed surprise at this sudden and unexpected query. For a moment she had a shrinking, panicky feeling that the task was way above her faculties. She felt too inexperienced to be able to handle this task alone. But her dismay and alarm were only transient, and she soon had herself in hand again. She must prove that she was able to take her turn without flinching.

"Of course I can, Angus!" she averred firmly. "But where do you intend going?"

"Early tomorrow mornin' me go down to Indian settlement down there," he waved his hand towards the south, "an' mak' them sen' message to Bend an' up to Beaver Narrows to mak' your people come fetch you. I be gone not more 'an two days. You sure you able manage?"

"Quite!"

"Good! You'll do to shoot river with!"

She flushed with pleasure at these homely words of praise from the reserved Angus; and especially at the smile of approval he flashed at her.

"Do you intend having the sergeant brought to Portage Bend?" she pursued her queries.

"No. Can't move him just now. Must be quiet, or else perhaps bleed to death inside. Has to stay till better," explained Angus.

"But, at least, you ought to get a doctor."

Angus smiled faintly. The nearest doctor was at Portage Bend.

"Take too long to get doctor here. Wess will be well long before him get here. Me doctor him. Don't worry, Wess tough as hell!" he said getting up to have another peep at the patient.

Half an hour later Weston woke up. He declared he was feeling fine, a statement which was received with frank, impolite scepticism by the others. He drank some of the oatmeal soup, and promptly dozed off again.

He spent a rather restless night, and several times Betty had to give him water, which she varied with cold oatmeal soup. In the morning he looked neither better nor worse; but his face was rather flushed, and she anxiously called Angus in for a consultation.

"That is nothin'," declared the doctor in his best professional manner, after having examined his patient. "He will be a little sick, but it soon pass over."

Having delivered this profound dictum he climbed into his canoe. He had already instructed her to feed the patient on oatmeal soup only during his absence, and to ignore any demands from the patient for a more substantial diet.

SHE felt not a little forlorn after having watched Angus's canoe disappear down the river. All her doubts of yesterday came back to her, and she experienced a hopeless feeling of helplessness. She began to doubt whether she had not taken on more than she was able to handle. She was so utterly alone and cut off from the rest of the world; and Angus's optimistic view on the situation had only half convinced her. What should she do if Weston's condition was really far more serious than they imagined?

The day passed quickly enough. Between cooking her own meals and looking after her patient she found plenty to occupy her time. Weston was very restless and craved for water almost incessantly. She had to sit by him most of the time to prevent him from tossing and worrying too much on his bunk, as she had noticed that he seemed more quiet when she was near. From time to time she fed him with some soup, to which she occasionally added small

doses of whisky, according to Angus's instructions.

Weston hardly spoke at all during the day. He seemed to lie in a semi-daze most of the time.

During the following night his restlessness increased, and his heavily flushed face made it plain to Betty that he had a violent fever.

Weston was all the time muttering to himself. At first the words were more or less unintelligible; but they gradually grew more coherent and comprehensible.

Now he was evidently chasing behind his dog-team up in the frozen North, shouting orders to his dogs, and cursing them good-humoredly. At other times he seemed to be shooting rapids in his canoe. "And, again, he was back at school.

Then he would know where Angus was, and, without waiting for an answer, he would burst forth into lengthy dissertations about his opinion of the listening girl; dissertations which caused rosy blushes to flood her cheeks, and gentle smiles to illumine her anxious and tense features.

At other times he would lie quiet, half unconscious; and those moments were about the hardest to bear for the watcher. The unbroken silence about her accentuated her utter loneliness, and her vague fears increased.

The dismal night dragged on, and the grey twilight had changed into the light of day when a change seemed to come over the patient. The hectic flush gradually left his face, and his breathing, which had been short and labored, now grew more regular. And after a while he seemed to be sleeping normally. She did not know much about traumatic fever, but she hoped that these signs portended a change for the better.

She felt unutterably weary in mind and body. The past anxiety and worry had taxed her strength more than she had been aware; and after she had sat for a while to convince herself that Weston was really sleeping, she turned to her own bunk and stretched herself out, fully dressed as she was. And almost before her head had touched her pillow, she was fast asleep.

When she again awoke the sun was shining full on the tent. Her thoughts were a little confused at first, and she had to grope around in her memory for her bearings. Suddenly realization came to her. She quickly raised herself into a sitting posture

on her bunk, and looked anxiously across at the sergeant. But what she saw reassured her. The patient was still sleeping tranquilly, his respiration coming regularly and rhythmically; and she heaved a sigh of relief. Evidently the fever had really burnt itself out.

She looked at her watch and found, much to her surprise, that it was close on eleven o'clock. She got up quietly, collected towel, soap, and a few toilet-articles, and stole silently out of the tent.

She walked down to the river and seated herself on the bank while she shook out her hair to let the breeze blow it about. Under the mellowing influence of smiling Nature her anxieties and fears of the preceding night already seemed to have receded into a dim and distant past. As she looked out over the sun-bathed river and forest, some of the things which Weston had uttered last night came back to her. At the memory she smiled dreamily; and for a long time she sat staring straight and fixedly ahead of her, sunk in what seemed to be a not unhappy reverie.

Some twenty minutes later she returned to camp. She was feeling wonderfully refreshed after a dip in the cool waters of the river, and she was humming gaily to herself. She broke off her musical efforts, however, as she neared the tent, for fear of disturbing her patient. She parted the tent-flaps and peeped inside, and to her satisfaction found him still sleeping peacefully.

She then proceeded to prepare her belated breakfast. Her meal finished, she cleaned and dried the dishes, and put the oatmeal soup left over from yesterday on the fire to have it hot for the patient when he awoke.

Still feeling the need for further scope for her energies she decided to make soda-biscuits.

While she was busy preparing the dough, she heard a feeble hail from the tent.

She walked rapidly across, and found the patient awake. His eyes looked a little tired, and his face somewhat pale and drawn under the tan; but otherwise he looked almost normal, she noticed with inward joy.

"Good morning, Dick!" she smiled her greeting. "How are you feeling?"

"Fit as a fiddle, thanks," he answered in a somewhat weak voice; but with his old-time grin in almost normal working order.

"But, say. What is the matter with your hands?"

A little puzzled she looked down to where her hands were clutching the tent-flaps; and immediately burst out laughing.

"Oh, that's flour. I am in the middle of making soda-biscuits."

"That's fine!" exclaimed Weston with satisfaction. "I can do with a few of those. I'm as hungry as anything."

"I am sorry to have to disappoint you," was the gentle but firm retort. "You are only allowed oatmeal soup."

Weston stared at her in obvious consternation, making a wry face.

"You don't mean it!" he protested, aghast. "I have a recollection of that soup from yesterday. Well let me tell you that soup is not fit for a weak invalid. It really isn't! Don't you think you could see your way to give me something more substantial in the line of victuals?" he pleaded, looking hopefully up at her.

But the pathos of his plea was wasted on the stern arbiter of his diet.

"No. You can't have anything more substantial than the soup for the time being. You were a very sick man last night. You had a violent fever and were very delirious. So you will have to stick to the soup till I'm quite sure the fever has left your system. I'll go and fetch it now; it's all ready for you."

AND to avoid further arguments, she quickly dropped the tent flaps, and walked to the fire.

She found him very thoughtful when she returned a few moments later, a mug in her hand.

"Look here, Betty," he said. "Honestly, now. Was I really as bad as that last night?"

"Honestly and truly, you were a very sick man!" was the diplomatic rejoinder. "Now take the soup, and swallow it like a good little man."

He obediently took the mug and tasted the contents gingerly with a noticeable lack of enthusiasm.

"Hm!" he grunted reflectively. "There seems to be an elusive flavor about this concoction which vaguely arouses pleasant memories." He took another tentative sip. "Whisky?"

Betty nodded her head.

"Oh, well. That helps matters a little,

of course. Although this confounded oat-meal slush nearly kills the taste of the whisky. Look here," he continued brightly. "What's wrong with giving me the whisky and the soup separately?"

"You are quite impossible!" laughed his tormentor. "As a patient you are quite hopeless. You are more fussy than a baby. You have to take the two mixed. This is medicine, not a banquet."

"Oh, well," sighed Weston resignedly, seeing his last hope dashed to the ground, as he once more applied himself to the mug.

Half-way down the cup he pondered for a moment, and then asked abruptly and suspiciously:

"Where's Angus this morning?"

"Oh, he left here yesterday morning," was the airy answer. "He was going down to the Indian settlement south of here to get help. He'll probably be back some time to-night or first thing to-morrow morning."

Weston stared at her, hardly able to believe his ears.

"Do you mean to say," he got out at last, "that Angus buzzed off and left you here alone with me?"

"Why not? I'm perfectly capable of looking after you."

"That's beside the point," cried Weston angrily. "I never heard anything more absurd in my life! Fancy buzzing off and leaving a girl alone here with a sick man. Why, I might have petered out and left you with a corpse on your hands! That would have been a nice kettle of fish, with you cut off from the rest of the world!"

"Well, fortunately nothing like that happened. And Angus was sure there was no likelihood of anything like that happening, or else he would not have gone," interposed Betty soothingly.

"How could Angus know?" snorted Weston reluctant to forgo his grievance. "Well, when Mr. Angus returns, he'll wish he had kept on going instead of coming back after I'm through with him!" he threatened grimly.

"He won't wish anything of the kind!" averred Betty with spirit. "You are not to abuse him in any way. He only did what he considered best in the circumstances; and I was in hearty agreement with his plan. So there will be no reproaches, lectures, or anything of the kind!"

Weston looked at her in quizzical despair over the rim of the cup.

"Look here!" he remonstrated. "You wouldn't mind my cussing him just a wee, tiny bit for being such a chump, would you?"

"I most decidedly would! He has not been a chump; so there! You are to greet him as a public benefactor when he returns. And if you don't promise, there will be no more whisky with your soup!" she threatened ominously.

"Oh, well," grinned Weston. "Under those circumstances I suppose my hands are tied and my mouth sealed. Angus shall go unscathed."

"Fine," said the victorious Betty. "Now be a good little man and finish your nice soup."

Weston reluctantly complied. When he had at last brought the agony to an end, Betty took the empty mug.

"Now lie quiet, and try to sleep," she admonished. "After all the talking you have done, you ought to feel tired and sleepy."

"Well, to tell the truth, I do feel a little as if a shut-eye wouldn't do me any harm. Must be because I've been gorging myself on that heavy meal," he answered, with heavy sarcasm.

His nurse turned away, laughing.

"Well, good night, my little man. And if you want me, call."

"All right. Thanks so much. So long, nurse."

Betty returned to her soda-biscuits.

As the first batch was ready for the frying-pan her eyes, which had been constantly straying towards the river, beheld a canoe coming up-stream towards the camp. It was manned by two men; and the white rolls of foam on either side of the sharp bow showed that it was being forced ahead at top speed.

"There is Angus back," she thought with relief and thankfulness.

She hurried down to the river-bank to receive the arrivals. As the canoe drew nearer she discovered to her amazement, however, that the occupants of the canoe were Corporal Wilson, whom she had met at Portage Bend, and an unknown half-breed.

As soon as Wilson became aware of the girl on the river-bank he waved his hand; and then applied himself to his paddle with renewed efforts.

Soon the canoe grated on the beach, and the two occupants climbed out.

"How-do-you-do, Miss Elliott? And how is Weston?" was Wilson's hurried greeting.

"He is much better, thank you. I was rather worried last night. He had a kind of fever, and was very delirious; but to-day he seems quite normal again. He is very weak, of course, though he doesn't seem to realize it. I hope he is asleep now, so we'd better not speak too loudly."

"That's excellent news! We got awfully worried when we met Angus down south and heard all about the affair. We travelled as hard and fast as we could to warn Weston; but of course it was just our luck to arrive too late," he ended a little bitterly.

"To warn him?" ejaculated Betty, surprised. "Did you know this was going to happen, then?"

"We didn't exactly know it was going to happen; but we had suspicions that something might happen if I didn't get to Weston in time. "You see, that Indian was a dangerous maniac. He hails from Lac du Broche. After he had made determined efforts to deplete the population up there for some time, he killed a constable who was sent up to gather him in. Then Weston got busy."

"Oh, yes. He told me all about it one day," interposed Betty.

"Oh, did he?" inquired Wilson, regret in his voice. He liked telling a story, and felt abused because Weston had forestalled him with at least part of the epic. "Anyhow, after Weston had got him, the Indian seemed to have taken violent objection to old Wess. Why, Lord only knows. Because Weston treated him like his own brother. Weston always treats his prisoners that way. However, to proceed with my tale of woe. In the asylum at Prince Albert the Indian spent most of his leisure hours raving about Weston, and impressing on his surroundings all the pleasant things he would do to the red-coat if he ever got hold of him. Well, five days after you had left we got a message from Prince Albert informing us that Weston's chum had flown the cage. And those fool officials at the asylum started hunting for him on their own at first, without warning our people at once. It was not till four days after the escape had taken place that the glad news was imparted to our Headquarters. Our chaps in Prince Albert got busy at once.

They soon discovered that a canoe, a rifle, ammunition, and some grub had disappeared from the neighborhood about the time the fellow had been playing the disappearing act. Putting two and two together, they soon came to the conclusion that the fellow was heading for home; and we immediately got instructions to head him off and bring him back.

"When old Trenchy—that's Inspector Trench, you know—heard about it, he went up in the air, and hit the ceiling with a 'bang!' It was the gun and ammunition that got his goat. It didn't take any sixth sense to divine that there would be fireworks if the lunatic should happen to fall in with your party. And if he first started shooting there was no telling where he would stop. So old Trenchy sent me and Alec Chaboye there"—he waved his hand towards his companion, who was unloading their canoe—"hot foot on your trail to try and head off the fellow; or, at least, to warn Wess that his friend was crowding the trail. We travelled as fast as we could; but, of course, had to arrive too late.

"ANYHOW," he started again more cheerfully, "thanks to Angus's keen nose, the tragedy was kept within reasonable bounds."

"Angus's nose?" repeated Betty, surprised. "What has that got to do with it?"

"Didn't Angus tell you about his part of the affair?"

"No. You see, there were such a lot of other things to do; so I forgot to ask him about it."

"Well, he told me all about it when I met him. He said he had smelt burning wood as you were crossing the lake south of here; and as he didn't see any signs of any fire, he got curious and suspicious. Indians are funny that way. They simply must get to the bottom of things that don't seem quite natural to them. And so he scouted around after you had pitched camp that night. He nosed about along the river; found an empty canoe drawn up on the beach; and, scenting danger, he beat all records back to the camp. Just on the fringe of this clearing he saw a fellow standing behind a tree with a rifle to his shoulder. Angus quickly raised his own gun; but the other chap beat him to the firing by a few seconds. But Angus, luckily, got him. It was a fine snap-shot of Angus's,

everything considered. He got the chap right through the heart," he commented appreciatively, not noticing the girl's shudder. "Well, the rest you know. But isn't it funny, though, how trouble always seems to gravitate towards Weston?" he ended reflectively. "He seems to draw it like a magnet. Even when he was holidaying up at Clear Water Lake he managed to poke his head into a wasps' nest. Only, as things turned out, he did most of the stinging."

"What happened at Clear Water Lake?" inquired Betty, her curiosity aroused.

"That's a long, sad tale," grinned Wilson. "I'll tell it to you tonight when we congregate around the camp-fire. It needs careful setting and comfort to do full justice to it. But one thing about your adventure struck me as funny. It seems that Weston was caught napping; and he is generally very wide awake."

"He wasn't caught napping!" defended Betty. "I saw he was uneasy about Angus's mysterious movements. He tried to hide it from me; but I caught his eyes searching the woods all the time we were talking. I know he saw the man before he shot. Because, without warning, he suddenly gave me a shove with his hand that sent me sprawling. I thought he had gone off his head at first; but when the shot came I understood. He was afraid that the bullet might hit me, and pushed me out of the way. Oh, it was sickening," she ended with a shudder. "I heard a dull thud just before the report from the rifle reached me; and the sergeant crumpled up and dropped to the ground."

"That thud was the bullet striking," explained Wilson gratis, eager to make everything quite clear.

"I understood that," she shuddered. "It was ghastly! At first I thought the sergeant had been killed."

"Weston isn't killed as easy as that," protested Wilson. "It has been tried before with indifferent success. It would be harder to kill old Wess than it would be to lay the dust of the Sahara with a sprinkling-can, or to convert a Kentucky moonshiner by sicking on to him a New England temperance lecturer. It can't be did!"

Betty smiled.

"For an Englishman you seem to have a fine grip on American slang."

"I learnt that one from a Yankee prisoner," grinned Wilson. "But to return to

Wess. Are you quite sure that he is out of danger?"

"Almost quite sure. I was very worried when he was so delirious last night; but this morning the fever seems to have left him entirely. He should be all right, if he'll only take proper care of himself. And we'll see to it that he does," she ended firmly.

"We certainly will! Could I have a peek at him, do you think?"

"I suppose so, if you will promise to be quiet, so you don't wake him up."

"I'll be quieter than a mouse! I gave Angus beans for leaving you alone up here," he continued, going off on a tangent.

"Why?" demanded Betty. "It was the only sensible thing to do!"

"I suppose so," he grudgingly admitted. "But it got my goat at the time. Anyhow, I don't think it broke Angus up. He didn't exactly tell me to go to some hot climate; but he looked it! But you have got a fine champion in Angus, I can tell you. He was chirping your praise loudly and enthusiastically. And that is saying some. Because Angus's pet expression of abusive disdain towards the world in general was heretofore: 'White squaw!' I bet he'll change his record now."

They both laughed, and commenced to stroll towards the tent.

When Betty had parted the tent-flaps and had stuck her head inside, she found Weston awake.

"Hello!" he grinned. "Did I hear the gentle murmur of voices on the breeze, or did I only dream it?"

"You heard it," rejoined Betty. "Here is a visitor for you."

She entered the tent closely followed by Wilson.

"Hello, Wess!" greeted the latter with a smile.

"Well! Well! If here ain't little 'Erb right amongst us!" grinned Weston; and Wilson winced. It was the lasting sorrow and regret of his life that he had been endowed with the names William Herbert. He considered the name Herbert a blot on an otherwise spotless horizon; and was, consequently, rather touchy on the subject.

"Shut up, you chump!" he growled. "There isn't much the matter with you when you start being personal and insulting. But I must say that for you: you have a positive genius for getting into messes. What you want is a nurse-maid!"

"I heartily agree with you! Perhaps my little 'Erb will try and qualify for the job? Anyhow, how did you come to join this picnic?"

Wilson briefly explained.

"Well, your turning up simplifies matters," remarked Weston, when the corporal had finished. "Now you can take Miss Elliott up to the Narrows as soon as Angus returns."

"Of course, with pleasure," agreed Wilson promptly.

But Miss Elliott, as it proved, was not at all in positive favor of the suggestion; and wasted no time in correcting their error.

"You will do nothing of the kind, Mr. Wilson!" she said firmly. "I am going to stay right here and look after him. He has shown signs of rebellion already; and it needs a person with a firm hand, whom he knows he can't bully, to look after him. So I am going to stay till it is safe to let him run loose alone. That's flat—and final!"

"But say," expostulated Weston, "it's up to us to get you to the Narrows as soon as possible."

"Don't you worry about that," answered Betty unfeelingly. "There's no hurry at all. I am going to stay with my sister and Allan all winter, so they'll have plenty of time to get tired of me as it is. When Angus gets back with his Indians, we'll send somebody up to Beaver Narrows for them, and they can come down and fetch me. A little trip won't do them any harm. Don't you agree that the arrangement is the only sensible thing?" she appealed to Wilson.

"Oh, well. Of course, it's up to you. I'm quite willing to take you up there. But if you choose to stay and play nurse-maid to that big chump, I can't force you away," he grinned. "Anyhow," he continued with an official touch, "I really ought to get down to Portage Bend as quickly as possible and report this affair. The inspector might feel anxious. So as soon as Angus returns I'll take the depositions of all of you; and then go straight down and have this mess officially settled and buried. That is, of course, if you are really determined to stay, Miss Elliott."

"I said so, and I am!" she smiled.

WESTON was still inclined to demur; but his expostulations lacked force and conviction. And at last he accepted

the situation with outward protest; but inward satisfaction.

"Well," said Betty, when all was settled, "I'm going out to help—Alec, wasn't it?—to prepare grub. I'll leave you to entertain the patient, Mr. Wilson. But remember, Dick, you are not to talk too much."

"All right, Betty, I'll promise to be good. Anyhow, there isn't much chance for anybody to get a word in edgeways when Wilson is around."

Wilson let the base insinuation pass.

The preparations for the meal were nearly completed, and Miss Elliott and Alec had been fast improving their acquaintance, when Wilson emerged from the tent and joined them by the fire. He wore an aggrieved air, and at once commenced voicing his grouch.

"Now, I ask you! Isn't that the limit? I was telling Wess a story, one of the best that ever happened; and right in the middle of it, I discovered that he had dropped off to sleep! Absolutely dropped off to sleep! I mean, it shows beastly little consideration for me; and I was telling the story well at that," he complained.

"Never mind," laughed Betty. "You can save it up for another time, when he is in a fit state to be stirred up with a kick if he shows signs of flagging. A little sleep won't do him any harm just now. Lunch is ready, so sit down and forget your troubles."

Wilson grinned and complied with alacrity.

"What's Wilson going to eat?" he inquired when the keen edge had been taken off his appetite. The mellowing influence of the food had filled him with a kindly interest in mankind.

"Oatmeal soup."

"Gosh!" he ejaculated, staring. "Nothing but that? That's no food for a human being. Give him some of these fried sausages," he suggested generously. "They're a favorite dish of his."

"I don't dare to," smiled the nurse. "Angus gave strict orders to give him nothing else but the soup."

"Oh, well. If Angus said so, I suppose it'll have to stick," he said resignedly. "Angus is quite an expert at treating gunshot-wounds. And, besides, I don't dare interfere between him and his baby chick. He would pick my eyes out if I did."

"Angus seems very fond of the sergeant."

"Fond is not the word," snorted Wilson.

"Angus considers old Wess a kind of improved specimen of super-god. And Wess thinks no end of Angus. And Angus is really a fine fellow, isn't that so, Alec?"

"Dam' fine!" agreed that worthy through an ample mouthful of victuals.

When they had finished their meal the corporal and Alec put up their tent, and Miss Elliott's things were moved into this; while Wilson appropriated the place vacated by her in the other tent.

Angus returned the next morning with an extra canoe and three Indians. The extra canoe was at once despatched to Beaver Narrows manned by two of the Indians, who were instructed to travel at top speed. Betty sent a note with them, briefly explaining the circumstances to the Gunns.

The third Indian was to remain in the camp as Angus's assistant.

Wilson now took down the evidence in writing of the three surviving actors in the affair, and had them each sign their depositions. This procedure particularly pleased Angus, whose only accomplishment as a penman was to be able to scrawl a sprawling "A. MacKenzie," with much labor and a wealth of facial contortions. And he never got tired of giving exhibitions of his proficiency.

Wilson and Alec then departed. The former left his tent at the camp, and he also promised to arrange to have some needed supplies sent up to them from the nearest trading-post.

"Gosh!" soliloquized Wilson, as he waved his hand for the last time to the girl just before the camp got hidden from view behind a point. "Isn't old Wess a fool for luck? Now, if this had happened to me, I'll bet that at the best I should have found an old dirty squaw around me to nurse me. And there is Weston, who never bothered about skirts, having this peach of a girl flung at him, so to speak. And me having worked overtime to try and click with a decent girl for ages is left out in the cold. It ain't fair," he ended his moan.

Those left at the camp now settled down to wait. Angus took over the position as valet to the patient, with Miss Elliott acting as nurse-in-chief.

She was far from feeling time hanging heavily on her hands. Between looking after the patient, and quelling his attempts at mutiny, which grew more frequent as he gained in strength, she helped with the cooking, and also assisted in setting and

lifting their fish-nets. And she felt the days slip rapidly by. The weather also was mostly favorable. They were visited by a few rainstorms; but they were so short and far between that they did not particularly incommode them.

Weston's progress towards recovery was sure but slow. Nearly a fortnight had rolled by before Angus, as surgeon-in-chief, gave the disgusted patient permission to leave his bunk. But after he had been permitted to move around, his strong, healthy constitution soon conquered any lingering rest of weakness. Betty and he used to roam around in the woods near the camp; and by the time the Gunns arrived in great haste from Beaver Narrows, he was so far recovered that Allan Gunn's intended solicitude towards the supposed sufferer changed to frank disgust.

"Gosh!" he snorted as he climbed out of the canoe. "Here we've been about breaking our backs getting here, and been loading the canoe with crape, expecting to find a corpse; and instead we find you looking like a million dollars! And those poor misguided Injuns you sent up arrived as physical wrecks, having imagined in their simplicity that it was a case of urgency! You're both frauds! I don't think you were shot at all, Wess. I strongly suspect that you two wanted to have a picnic, and thought you would drag us into it under false pretences!"

"Huh!" growled Angus pugnaciously, rising up in arms to defend his chick. "If you shot like sergeant, you be kicking toes in air by now!"

"Hello, you old pepper-pot! Did that get under your skin too?" grinned Gunn.

"That's right, Angus," smiled Mrs. Gunn her approval. "You just see him off! Are you really as well as you look, Dick?"

"Much better," grinned the invalid. "You see, I've been well looked after. Your sister and Angus have been fussing over me as if I were an infant in arms."

"Well, so you are!" rejoined Mrs. Gunn smartly. "All men are, for that matter, when you get down to cases. Well, Betty, my dear," she continued, embracing her sister. "It is good to see you again. But it was a funny welcome you got. Anyhow, you seem to have behaved amazingly well for a cheechako."

"What else did you expect?" interposed Gunn in frank surprise. "She's your sister, ain't she?" At which open, ingenuous, hus-

bandly compliment Mrs. Gunn blushed like a seventeen-year-old.

"Don't talk nonsense, Allan," she reproved sternly. "Now listen all of you to words of wisdom. Now we have got here, we might as well enjoy a picnic for some days. I left Tootles," the *nom de guerre* of her two year old son, "with his Indian nurse, who is capable, trustworthy, and a dear. And, besides, I bundled them both over to Bill Jennings." That gentleman was the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company's post at Beaver Narrows; Gunn's keen competitor, implacable business enemy, and staunch friend. "I gave Bill strict orders to look after the two during our absence. He was frightfully keen to come with us at first; but when he learnt that he was to have Tootles to keep him company, he promptly changed his mind. He's crazy about that kid, and does his level best to ruin him. Now we'll all stay here for five days and enjoy ourselves. I don't dare stay any longer, for fear of finding Tootles' morals wrecked past redemption and repair on our return. All in favor of the plan?"

They were!

AND the picnic proved a success. They roamed the woods, went fishing on the river, and took longer outings in the canoes. On all canoe-trips Weston, as behaved an invalid, filled the rôle as passenger; to his unspeakable disgust and against his lusty protests, which latter were mere waste of breath.

But, somehow, Weston did not feel entirely happy. And as the day of parting rapidly approached he grew more and more thoughtful. Even Allan Gunn noticed this, and commented on it.

"Say, I don't think Wess is all there yet," he confided to his partner in life. "He doesn't seem as chirpy as he used to by a long shot. I guess that shooting took more pep out of him than we thought." On which remark his wise and observant wife advised him not to be a chump, and to run away and play and not bother her. Whereupon Allan obediently went, scratching his head in perplexity.

Weston was floundering in deep waters. The poignant feeling of regret at the thought of Betty's forthcoming departure had not been needed to convince him that his feelings for her had passed the stage

of friendship and admiration, and had developed into something far stronger. He had long since confessed to himself that he loved her. And he wondered what her feelings were with regard to him.

Of course, he told himself several times during each day, the straightforward, obvious course to pursue would be to ask her straight out; but here he found himself up against a blank wall. He, who was famed for an almost brutal directness, for once fell a prey to vacillation and compromise. His heart simply quailed at the mere thought of facing Betty with his confession.

The fond characteristic of him as obligingly sketched by Miss Morgan up at Clear Water had not a little to do with his trepidation. Perhaps Betty considered him in the same light, only she was too kind to advertise the fact.

After all, what had he to offer any girl? He frankly admitted that taking everything into consideration, he was not much of an egg. He was, of course, well off; but that was about his only asset, and not much of an asset at that according to his views. On the other hand, he was much older than Betty. She could not be more than nineteen or twenty; and that would make him her senior by the tremendous gulf of ten years. She must regard him as about middle-aged, was his bitter observation. And he had to admit that it was not a particularly dazzling prospect to dangle before any girl to become Mrs. Sergeant, and be tied to a man who might have to leave home at a moment's notice to chase around to the various points of the compass for months at a time. He might even be posted to a place so far north that it would be impossible to bring a wife along with him. Herschell Island for instance. And, besides, the authorities frowned on matrimonial aspirations in the rank and file. Up to now he had been in hearty agreement with their attitude, had found it entirely sound; but now his conviction began to waver. If a fellow wanted to get married that was his look-out; and had nothing to do with the old fogeys at Headquarters, he thought rather hotly.

Oh no, he sighed lugubriously, his case was absolutely hopeless! At present he was really not in a position to ask of any girl to share his life. But, nevertheless, he had hopes for the future. It was not as if Betty was passing out of his life for ever, he

argued earnestly. He would be able to see her up at Beaver Narrows during the winter, when patrols took him that way. And he would see to it that patrols did! And, anyhow, she would be passing through Portage Bend on her way out next spring.

However, before she left he really ought to give her a hint at least, as to the state of his heart, he pondered. He even went so far as to fashion in his mind the right and proper things to say to Betty. But every time he got so far his doubts began to assert themselves afresh—and the merry-go-round was in full blast again.

No, Weston was not happy!

And as he was wrestling with his problem—getting nowhere—the days rolled by; and eventually the last day arrived. Early next morning the Gunns and Betty were to pull out for Beaver Narrows.

Towards evening of that last day Gunn and Angus's Indian assistant had gone to lift the nets; while Mrs. Gunn, assisted by Angus, commenced to prepare supper. She had threatened to show them what camp-cooking could be really like; and was now preparing to carry her threat into execution.

She commenced operations by banishing her sister and Weston from the camp on the plea that their presence distracted her from her earnest culinary endeavors.

The two tramped around in the woods for a while, and gradually drifted down towards the river bank; where they eventually came to anchor on a windfall, which formed a not uncomfortable seat.

The flow of conversation was neither particularly bright nor smooth. Both seemed preoccupied.

"Well, to-morrow will be the end of the picnic," observed Weston presently.

"Yes," agreed his companion. "It seems funny that to-morrow we'll all be scattered again."

"Funny" was not exactly the word Weston would have chosen; but he nodded his agreement.

"Anyhow, Betty," he continued, "I can never thank you enough for what you have done for me. Staying alone up here in the wilderness with me, nursing me and all that. There are not many who would have done it."

"Don't be absurd, Dick!" laughed Betty. "What I did was nothing. The least I could do was to look after you a little when you

got hurt. You seem to have overlooked the little fact that if it hadn't been for me, you would not have been shot up at all. It is I who have to thank you for coming to my assistance down at Portage Bend."

"Now you're talking rot," retorted Weston elegantly and determinedly. "I owed your sister and Allan to get you up to the Narrows; and, anyhow, I would have been a poor kind of a specimen of a man if I hadn't tried to help you out. And, besides, I wouldn't have missed this trip for anything. It has been one of the finest trips I ever had, even though that poor lunatic spoilt it a bit. I'll miss you a whole lot when you are gone," he ended with a boldness which surprised himself.

"Will you, Dick?" asked Betty softly, looking at him out of the corner of her eye.

"Of course, I will," he said sincerely. Some quality in his companion's voice made him for the moment forget his diffidence and trepidation; he took the bit between his teeth and plunged ahead regardlessly: "And Betty, I want to..."

"Hey, you two!" came an excited hail from the river. Weston broke off his piece abruptly; two pairs of startled eyes turned towards the source of the uproar; and they discovered a canoe, making straight for the bank, in which were seated Allan Gunn and the Indian. The former was waving an agitated hand in the air. "Say!" continued Gunn his happy bellowing. "Come down and look at the whopper of a sturgeon I found in the far net! I bet you it's more than five feet long! About the heftiest sturgeon I ever clapped my eyes on!"

ALLAN GUNN was about Weston's best friend; but at the moment he felt that it would have been an unalloyed pleasure to gloat over Allan's corpse. Just as he had keyed himself up to regardless recklessness that idiot of a chump had to come along with his infernal chirping about a sturgeon and trample on the whole thing! Oh, hell!

Reluctantly he got up from the log and followed Betty down to the beach, mentally building up a veritable chamber of horrors of the things he wished would happen to Allan; when his brains were not busy fashioning silent, potent, comprehensive and indiscriminate curses against Allan, canoes and sturgeons.

And to add insult to injury he had duly to admire the "whopper," while his whole

system was overcharged with homicidal yearnings.

"Say! You two climb into the canoe, and we'll lug you back to camp. It's near feeding time, anyhow," invited Gunn, who was filled with the milk of human kindness towards all mankind.

Both accepted the invitation. Weston, principally, because his morale had been so effectually shattered that he did not have the heart to rebel. He knew the spell had been broken, and that the shining hour of opportunity was hopelessly lost and gone.

When they arrived at the camp Mrs. Gunn took less interest in her jubilant lord and master and his whopper than she did in her sister and Weston. She was very fond of them both, and had cherished certain hopes which she fondly expected to be fulfilled before the picnic broke up. But her keen eyes detected that all was not well with the objects of her solicitude; and she wondered. But she was enlightened. She was a lady with a keen imagination and intuition; and when her husband in the seclusion of their tent that night, prompted by a few leading questions from her, innocently related how he had stirred up the two of them when they had been sitting on a log like two lost souls, looking silly—so he described it—she put two and two together; and soon had about the right addition. And be it said here as a sop to the vindictive-minded, she promptly held up for her husband's inspection, such a lurid word-picture of himself, that it surprised him.

However, Weston soon got himself in hand again. He held a lightning-review of his common-sense arguments; and at the finish he was inclined to consider Allan's intervention as being for the best.

The evening eventually proved a success. Mrs. Gunn vindicated to the full her claim to be a culinary artist of no mean order; and after the various objects of her art had been well and truly sampled, all was once more harmony and good-will.

At eight o'clock on the following morning the last of the Gunns' bundles had been packed away in their canoe, and they stood ready to depart.

Weston felt like a sick calf, and had to wrestle hard so as not to look like one. And, consequently, he displayed almost indecently high spirits.

But when he said good-bye to Betty—who, by the way, also seemed to be unusually bright and vivacious on that morn-

ing—he had to struggle hard to keep himself in hand. And so they took leave of each other with a quite frivolous gaiety, which did not deceive Mrs. Gunn, who was watching them with an amused and satisfied smile.

"Well, Dick," she remarked as Weston turned to her and grabbed her hand, "I suppose you will find your way up to the Narrows some time this winter?"

"Oh, yes. He has promised already," interposed her sister cheerfully. "He has also promised to write to us occasionally."

"Ha! ha! Weston write!" laughed Gunn derisively. "I'd like to see it! Up to now, he has only written when there was no way around it; and then the effort used to make him sore as a wet cat. He's famed for it. Gosh, if Wess starts writing letters voluntarily, he must be reformed or something, I'll tell the world!"

The harassed Weston found Gunn's observation so grossly tactless under the circumstances that his foot itched to get in one healthy kick; but as that satisfying procedure was out of the question, he forced a sickly grin, and muttered some inane remark about "even the worst of us changing our ways."

Mrs. Gunn shared Weston's opinion about the remark, and she directed towards the offender a glance which made him look extremely self-conscious and feel worse.

At last the whole party had climbed into their canoe, and pushed off. Soon the little craft disappeared around the first bend up the river. Three hands waved to Weston just before they rounded the point; but he only had eyes for one of them.

The sun was shining brightly and there was a pleasant tang and cheerful hum of late summer in the air; but if anybody at that moment had said to Weston that it was a dull, bleak day, he would promptly have answered: "Yes," and meant it.

For a long time he stood staring at the spot where he had last seen the canoe, calling himself uncomplimentary names. He rapidly rehearsed in his mind all the things he ought to have said and done; but had not. And, somehow, his usual arguments seemed to have lost some of their magic power.

At last he roused himself, and turned away with a heavy sigh.

"Angus!" he shouted. "Get all our things packed and stowed in the canoe. We leave at once!" He did not want to stay at this

camp with its memories for longer than he could help.

"Good!" answered Angus. And he and the Indian immediately commenced dismantling the camp. The Indian was going with them all the way to Portage Bend, as Weston was as yet not fit enough to take any appreciable share in the tasks of the trail.

The packing was quickly effectuated; and soon their canoe shot down the river.

And the camp, which for a time had been the stage for some of life's tragedies and comedies, lay forsaken and deserted in its forest fastness. The spruce-beds, left on the ground, and the blackened site of the fire only served to accentuate the cold, cheerless, deserted aspect of the place.

CHAPTER XVI

AS soon as Weston arrived at Portage Junction he again took up his duties.

Summer faded into fall; and soon winter held the country in its icy grip. And still Weston's eagerly anticipated patrol to Beaver Narrows had not materialized. And, moreover, it seemed as far off as ever. A lot of work had kept him tied to the town during the fall and early winter; and in November Inspector Trench was called to Prince Albert to fill a temporary vacancy, while Weston was left in charge of the Detachment. He chafed at the delay; and mournfully told himself that if Betty thought of him at all, she would be sure to forget him if he did not get up and see her soon.

Of course he had managed to write her a few letters. He had organized a veritable spy-service to keep him informed about prospective departures towards Beaver Narrows. And to those departing travellers, red and white, he entrusted his letters with strict injunctions—backed up with appropriate threats—to see that they were safely delivered.

But letters were not the same as presenting himself in person, he assured himself dolefully. He simply could not get the letters interesting, and he failed hopelessly in introducing into them the right personal touch. They always appeared to him cold and impersonal, more like official reports.

At long last the inspector returned; and Weston at once commenced to point out to him, earnestly and convincingly, the ad-

visableness of sending somebody up to the Beaver Narrows district to look into conditions up there. He further volunteered, with becoming modesty and indifference, to undertake the arduous patrol himself. The inspector, unsuspecting of guile in his subordinate, shared his views; and the trip was about settled when a bomb burst. And again Weston's plans were thrown into hopeless confusion. Around Christmas-time Weston, much to his surprise, found himself promoted to an inspectorship, with orders to take over the prairie station at Lethbridge at once.

But his delight in his promotion was almost crushed at the thought that now his trip to Beaver Narrows must remain a fond dream only. And, what was even worse, he would not be on the spot when Betty returned from Beaver Narrows. Fate certainly seemed to hand him some nasty knocks, he sighed a little unreasonably.

He promptly dispatched a letter to Beaver Narrows, and sent it up with Angus, specially employed for the purpose. He acquainted the Gunns with his good fortune, at the same time informing them, with manly regrets, that it would now be impossible for him to pay the promised visit.

He arrived at Lethbridge in a state of gentle melancholy; and his new surroundings did not help revive his drooping spirits. He found the little prairie town unutterably dull; and totally lacking in scope for his restless energies. And, besides, he missed the North with its deep, free forests; its lakes and rivers; and its general untrammelled freedom.

Shortly after he had arrived at Lethbridge he received a shock. A letter from England acquainted him with the death of his cousin, who had broken his neck in the hunting field. The shock was not so much caused by the sad demise of his cousin. It was the fact that his cousin's death made him the heir to his uncle, the Earl of Ernemount, which caused the dark frown to gather on Weston's brow when he received the news.

He had no ambition to be heir to any earl. He was getting on exceedingly well in his chosen profession. An inspector at thirty, he stood an excellent chance of eventually reaching the higher grades of the service. Even Chief Commissioner was not absolutely outside the bounds of the probable, he told himself cheerfully and modestly. So he had no inclination or desire to

give up a promising career for any earldom. And his thoughts about his late cousin for being so careless as to getting himself killed were somewhat unreasonable, and not at all quite the right and proper thoughts about a dead man.

But gradually his reflections turned into more optimistic channels. His uncle had not yet filled sixty years of age, and was hale and sound. True, he was a widower. But there was no earthly reason why he should not remarry. It was simply his duty to marry again, continued Weston his earnest argument, and secure a succession in the direct line. Even if this natural and logical procedure did not occur to his uncle independently, he, Weston, was going to point out the path of duty to him in a few tactful and well-chosen words!

Having thus, theoretically at least, disposed of the future of the Earldom of Erne-mount to his satisfaction, he felt in a more cheerful frame of mind.

He spent the following winter and spring down at Lethbridge; but towards the end of the following May a minor upheaval took place in the Police. One of the Assistant Commissioners retired; the superintendent at Prince Albert was promoted Assistant Commissioner; and Weston's late officer commanding at Portage Bend, Inspector Trench, was promoted to the vacant superintendentship at Prince Albert.

Superintendent Trench's first official act in his new position had been to secure the services of his late trusted sergeant for his division; and so Weston, to his immense satisfaction, found himself transferred back to Portage Bend as officer in charge of the Detachment.

He found, somewhat to his relief, that most of his old comrades in the detachment had been sent elsewhere. The only remaining one was Wilson, now a sergeant. The altered situation between the erstwhile chums was felt by both to be a little embarrassing at first. Weston felt like an ass when Wilson clicked to attention and addressed him as "sir"; but by both exercising the utmost tact the changed relations soon adjusted themselves and became normal.

But otherwise bad luck seemed to stick to Weston like a burr. About the first news which had met him on his eager return to Portage Bend was that Betty had passed through the town a few days previously on her way back to Toronto. He also found a

letter from her, in which she expressed her disappointment at missing him, and further informed him that she had to go back to Toronto to attend the wedding of a girl friend. But, she finished up, it was quite probable that she might go back to Beaver Narrows later in the summer; and she looked forward to seeing him then.

This cheered him for a while; but not for long. He did not quite relish the term "quite probable." It sounded too vague and indefinite. And, besides, back in Toronto she would be among her own friends, and surrounded by goodness knows how many eager swains, all prepared to improve each shining hour. Of all, this thought was the most distressing.

In the panicky state of his harassed mind he conjured up an awe-inspiring picture of about all the lads of Toronto making a concerted rush toward Betty, each loaded down with offers of marriage!

After this gruesome picture, with variations, had haunted him for a few days, he finally decided that he had to do something. And he did it. He made up his mind to write a letter to Betty and unburden his heart.

How many draughts were penned before the letter was eventually written is not on record; but there was enough paper used to have kept the Salvation Army in material for tracts during quite a period of time. For about two days he struggled manfully, tearing up effort after effort in disgust.

At last, in desperation, he gave up all attempts at artistic composition. To-day was mail-day; and he wanted to get the letter off without further delay. He therefore rapidly wrote a straightforward, simple letter, in which he stated in a few sentences, without any embellishments, that he loved her, and would she marry him. Not daring a further critical review of his effort he hurriedly jabbed it into an envelope, sealed and addressed it, stuck on a stamp, and rapidly walked across to the post office.

When the letter struck the bottom of the letterbox with a dull thud of finality he felt a sinking sensation in the pit of his stomach; and for one panicky moment he felt strongly tempted to get Banting to open the box and return him his letter. But he dared not for fear of making himself appear ridiculous.

To Weston the world revolved more smoothly and evenly after he had got the letter off his chest. He had figured out the

approximate date when he could expect an answer, and he was, of course, anxiously looking forward to what that day would bring.

A few mornings later he received two surprises. The first was lying on top of his mail when he arrived at the office in the morning. It was enclosed in an envelope bearing the New York stamp, and addressed to him in an unknown, but unmistakably, female hand. As he picked up the envelope he shot a suspicious look across the office at Sergeant Wilson, shrewdly suspecting him of having placed the missive on top of the pile with fixed purpose and intent; but the suspect seemed to be engrossed in his work.

Idly speculating on the identity of the sender, he slit the envelope open, and extracted the letter he found inside. He folded it out, turned it over, and glanced at the signature: "Marion Morgan." He nearly whistled his surprise.

"Now what the . . ." he muttered to himself. And with knitted eyebrows and a half scowl on his face, he commenced to read the communication.

"DEAR MR. WESTON," it ran, "We are all so delighted to hear about your promotion." Now, how did they come to hear about that? soliloquized Weston. "We have often been talking about you; and have been recalling the adventurous, though delightful days we spent up at Clear Water Lake.

"I am afraid you thought me a little rude and abrupt that last evening we spent together on the lake; but at the time I was annoyed, and I am afraid I lost my temper." Weston grinned broadly. She did! With a vengeance! "But afterwards I realized that you had been right; and I decided to tell you so the next morning; but then you had left. I was so sorry not to be given an opportunity of telling you then, and therefore do so now.

"We are looking forward to seeing you again. Father says that he hopes he will be able to take another trip up in your beautiful woods next summer; and he is anticipating being able to persuade you to join our party. Anyhow, we should all of us be very pleased to see you, if you should happen to come to New York.

"Sincerely yours,
"MARION MORGAN."

"Well, well!" thought Weston, more than surprised. "That girl has got her good points after all."

He placed the letter on his desk and attacked the remainder of his mail.

The next letter he picked up furnished the second surprise. As was the case with

the first envelope this also bore the New York stamp. But in this case the handwriting was masculine, and well known to him, it belonged to his uncle, the Earl of Ernemount. He quickly opened the envelope, wondering what his uncle was doing on this side of the Pond.

The first lines gave him the explanation. His uncle had never visited America before, and had decided to pay a visit to that country of hustle and high-speed activities. Incidentally, he also wanted to see at first hand how his nephew and heir was getting along. And Weston was very pleased at the prospect of receiving a visit from his uncle. He had always been fond of him; and he had been the only one of all his relatives who had not passed any adverse remarks that time, years ago, when he had voiced his decision to go to Canada and join the Mounted Police.

But on the second page of his uncle's letter Weston came across a passage which made him give way to a sudden and undignified burst of laughter. The sudden outburst so startled Sergeant Wilson that it caused him to make an ink-plot on a voucher he was preparing. He lifted his head sharply, and threw a wondering glance across at his superior officer and friend.

"It is all right, Wils," reassured Weston, controlling himself with an effort. "I only laughed at something funny in this letter; but it's not for publication, I'm sorry to say."

"Sorry," mumbled Wilson, again bending to his task, as he realized that the dramatic possibilities of the situation were exhausted as far as he was concerned.

This was the passage which had provoked Weston's outburst:

"The other night I dined with a chap whom I met at Biarritz a couple of years ago. I ran across him the other day at the club where I have been put up; and he carried me off to his place for dinner one day. He is a millionaire of some kind. I heard one chap at the club refer to him as the Banana King. You know him, as a matter of fact. Morgan is his name, and he told me that he had spent some time with you up in the Canadian forests last summer. I happened to mention in the course of the conversation out at his place, that I was going up to Portage Bend to visit a scamp of a nephew who was in the Mounted Police up there. And their pertinent inquiries soon laid bare my dark secret.

"You seem to have spent a hectic time up there, judging from what I was told. Anyhow, Morgan and his wife—a dear soul—

seemed to consider you a kind of combination of a Sir Galahad and Robin Hood. They all seemed highly surprised to hear that you were my nephew and heir—especially the daughter, who struck me as a very beautiful girl; though she seemed a mite too self-possessed and sophisticated to my old-fashioned English eyes. . . .”

It was at this point that Weston's laughter had jeopardized Wilson's carefully-prepared voucher.

Now he understood her letter. Miss Morgan's apology was directed to the heir to the Earl of Ernemount, and not to that obscure individual, Richard Weston. Now he was shining in reflected glory. He would write her a letter simply flowing over with milk and honey. She deserved it for her brazen gall, he ended his self-communication with a grin, as he once more picked up his uncle's letter, and continued the perusal:

“I intend to leave here on Friday,” wrote his uncle. “That should get me to Portage Bend on the following Wednesday. Or so, at least, a young gentleman at the travelling bureau assured me. He had some trouble finding the place at first; and seemed concerned when he discovered that it could only be reached via a branch-line with trains running three times per week only. Out of the kindness of his heart he hinted to me that it might be advisable for me to take along camp equipment and provisions; as it would be very doubtful if any fitting accommodations could be found in such an out-of-the-way place. He looked very sceptical when I informed him that to the best of my knowledge and belief there existed both hotels and shops up there. He shrugged his shoulders, and his eyes seemed emphatically to convey the ominous message: ‘On your own head be it; I have done my duty!’”

Weston grinned at this; but he frowned over his closing remarks:

“With regard to your carefully-worded, but quite transparent, suggestions, that I may relieve you of the unwelcome prospect of succession by perpetrating matrimony, I regret to have to disappoint you. The direct line was definitely broken when poor James died, so you had better get used to the idea that in due course you will have to step into my shoes. And I will say that for you, Richard, that I am convinced that you will make a worthy successor.

“Yours very sincerely,
“ERNEMOUNT.”

Weston pondered over this last paragraph. Damn it! Why can't uncle be reasonable? Anyhow, he reflected more cheerfully some moments later, if the worst came

to pass, it would be a fair number of years before the question would become pressing. His uncle had always been a careful liver, and ought to be able to reach a ripe age. And, of course, there was always the prospect of the old boy changing his mind. Well, time would tell! And he broke off his reflections on personal matters to delve into the work of the day.

On the following Wednesday Weston, dressed in mufti, stood on the platform, watching a wheezy, dejected-looking old engine haul three dilapidated day-coaches into the depot. When the engine had at last come to a standstill, he let his eyes sweep rapidly along the coaches for a glimpse of his uncle. But when his glance reached the end coach it became fixed. He drew in his breath sharply, and stood for a few seconds as if turned to stone.

As he stared with unbelieving eyes at the trim figure of the girl who was alighting, he forgot his uncle, his surroundings, everything else but the object to which his eyes were glued.

He soon regained his power of movement, and hurried forward just as the girl's eyes met his over the heads of the crowd. He saw her smile and wave her hand; and his forward movement forthwith became a rush, to the annoyance of several innocent loungers who blundered across his path.

“Betty!” cried Weston when he got up to where she was standing beside her suitcase on the platform. “Is it really you?”

“Yes, Dick,” she smiled, her cheeks pink. “I have come back, you see. I am going up to the Narrows again.”

“Did you . . . did you . . .?” commenced Weston; but suddenly he discovered that their surroundings were perhaps a little too public for private exchanges of confidences. “Oh, say. We can't talk here,” he continued hurriedly. He grabbed her suit-case with one hand, and her arm with the other, and propelled her through the crowd pressing around the train. He led her around the station building, and found a vacant spot in front of the gable end. He promptly dropped the suit-case and faced her squarely.

“Did you receive my letter?” he asked abruptly.

She nodded her head, her eyes searching the ground, while the color in her cheeks heightened.

“And . . . and . . .?” stuttered Weston. frantically groping around in his mind for

words. Evidently Betty seemed to be able to fill in the blanks, however, for she looked up at him through lowered eyelashes, a smile playing about her mouth.

"That's why I came, to . . . to give you my answer in person. And . . . and I also wanted to see you again," she answered softly.

"You . . . you mean that . . ." he began; but again his vocabulary hung fire. But he evidently had an intelligent audience, for Betty's eyes again sought the ground while she nodded her head.

Her evident confusion acted on Weston as a kind of antidote; and he once more began to feel his own masterful self. And he decided on the spot that direct methods were indicated. He threw a rapid glance around him; and before Betty had realized his intentions he had folded her firmly in his arms and had kissed her. He immediately released her; and she stepped back a pace.

"Dick!" she exclaimed, her happy smile belying the reproach in her voice, her face a riot of color. "How could you, with such a lot of people about. Somebody might have been looking!"

"Nobody was," he grinned, unabashed. "I had a quick peep before I went into action. And if somebody did happen to see, who cares? I feel so happy, I don't grudge anybody a modest share in my happiness. And to think that you love me. I can hardly believe it yet. And did you love me already up at camp?"

"Of course I did, Dick," smiled Betty. "I really think I fell in love with you the first time I saw you. I thought you were such a dear when . . . No! Not again in this public place!" she interrupted herself hurriedly, as Weston showed signs of further direct attacks.

He grinned; but kept himself in order.

"And to think that I was walking around up at the camp being miserable, when you cared all the time," he regretted, shaking his head sadly. "If I had only told you then."

"But you did tell me, Dick," she interposed with a provoking smile.

"I told you?" queried Weston, his face puckered in frank, incredulous bewilderment. "When?"

"The night you were so delirious. In the intervals between cursing persons unknown,

and dogs and things, you were busy saying nice things about me, and . . . and . . . Well, everything," she ended, laughing at the expression of abashed confusion on Weston's face.

"If I had only known," he moaned, taking a firm grip on himself. "Then I should . . ."

But the record of his intended heroics will be lost to the world for ever. He suddenly broke off on hearing steps crunching the cinders beside him. Turning quickly he found himself face to face with a tall, upright man in a soft hat and a well-cut suit of tweeds. He looked like an older edition of Weston himself, only the new-comer wore a close-cropped moustache, and the hair over his eyes was shot with streaks of grey. A pair of keen, but good-natured, eyes looked out of a pleasant, healthy face.

"Surely it is Richard," he said, removing his hat.

"Uncle!" shouted Weston, grabbing his hand. "Good Lord! I had forgotten all about you!"

"So I seemed to gather," answered his uncle dryly, his eyes twinkling.

"You must excuse me, uncle," pleaded the nephew. "But I'm a bit upset this morning. This is my fiancée, Miss Elliott, uncle," he proudly effected the introduction, indicating the blushing girl.

"How-do-you-do?" said Lord Erne-mount, taking the girl's hand in his, his shrewd eyes quietly appraising her. Then he smiled, and Betty decided on the spot that she liked him. "Well, well! This is certainly a country of surprises. I go out to visit a nephew, and find that I have a niece as well. But you never told me you were engaged to be married, Richard!"

"I wasn't till quite recently," grinned Weston. "We'll tell you all about it by and by. But what about your luggage, uncle? Haven't you got any bags or something?" he inquired, eager to make amends for his former neglect of his relative.

"Yes. I had a couple of bags. And when I discovered that you were missing, I approached a young gentleman in red tunic and Stetson hat—one of your men, I presumed—and asked him for information about you. He introduced himself as Sergeant Wilson; volunteered the information that he had seen you move off in this direction with a lady; and further offered to

look after my bags for me while I went to hunt for you. He was a very obliging young chap."

"Wilson is. And he doesn't miss much either, evidently. And here he comes."

Wilson had just rounded the corner of the building, and was approaching them with a bag in each hand and a huge grin on his face.

"How-do-you-do, Miss Elliott?" he greeted her, after having dumped the bags on the ground.

"Let me introduce you to the future Mrs. Weston," cried the inspector boyishly.

At that Wilson's grin threatened to split his face.

"Congratulations!" he shouted, grabbing Betty's hand, and pump-handling it vigorously, until she was sorely afraid that her much-abused arm would be torn out of its socket. Then he let go of her hand and turned to Weston to repeat the performance; but brought himself up sharply as sudden realization came to him. He clicked his heels together, and raised his hand to his hat.

"May I be allowed to tender my congratulations, sir," he said formally, his smile being totally eclipsed by an expression of embarrassment. He had been on the very verge of committing a severe breach of etiquette in public!

"Good Lord, Wils?" laughed Weston, grabbing his subordinate's hand and putting in some good work in the pumping line himself. "Let's drop official etiquette, red tape, ceremonial, etcetera, on this mad and happy morning."

"Right you are, Wess! Congrats, old man!" cried Wilson, the grin again blossoming forth in full glory. "I'm awfully glad. Though I have had my suspicions since that time up at camp."

"Then you possess a very wonderful intuition, my lad; and ought to set yourself up as a fortune-teller," was Weston's dry comment. "However, we can't stand talking here all day. Give me your checks, Betty and uncle, and I'll go and arrange to have your heavy luggage sent up to the hotel. You two can look after Betty in the meantime."

"Not at all!" protested his uncle firmly. "You two stay here, and I am sure that Sergeant Wilson will be kind enough to come along with me, and help arrange about the luggage."

"Certainly, sir," declared Wilson with alacrity. "Please come along, and we'll have everything arranged in a jiffy. I'd better take these bags and things too; and then it can all be sent up together."

The two disappeared, Wilson carrying Lord Ernemount's two bags, the latter insisting on carrying Betty's suit-case.

"Who is your uncle, Dick?" asked Betty, as soon as the others were out of earshot. "You forgot to tell me his name."

"He's Lord Ernemount," answered Weston.

"Lord Ernemount? Do you mean that he is an honest-to-goodness English lord?"

"Sure," grinned Weston, amused at her surprise. "But he ain't wearing his coronet to-day. He's the Right Honourable the Earl of Ernemount with a string of letters behind his name, to give him his official title. And that reminds me," he chuckled. "I'm his heir-apparent and successor; so you stand a fair chance of becoming a countess some day."

She looked at him, her eyes wide with surprise.

"You're joking, Dick," she gasped at last.

"Indeed I'm not. I gently suggested to uncle to remarry and start a family of his own, to let me out of it. But he doesn't seem to see things my way just yet. But I have hopes for the future."

"But, Dick, this is impossible!"

"What is impossible, dear?"

"I can't marry you if you are to be an earl some day. I wouldn't be the right kind of wife for you then."

Weston threw back his head and laughed joyously.

"Wouldn't you though! You would just make the finest and sweetest countess going. Anyhow, don't shy at a shadow. Uncle may come to see things my way some day, and you may still have to end your days as plain Mrs. Weston. What interests me now is this: when are we going to get married?"

"Oh, Dick," murmured Betty, confused and blushing. "We can't get married for some time yet."

"Oh, can't we! We can and we shall! We've wasted enough time already. Will next week do?"

"But, Dick!" she protested. "That is quite impossible. And you seem to forget that I am on my way up to Beaver Narrows."

"That's a thing you had better forget; because you aren't going," answered Weston firmly and masterfully. "The crowd up there can come down here; Tootles and all. There's nothing for Allan to do up there during summer. And they'll be down for the wedding, anyhow."

"But, Dick," pleaded Betty, "you don't seem to take into consideration that even if I don't go to Beaver Narrows there will be an awful lot of things to get ready. 'It'll take months. And, besides, father and mother will want to have a say in the matter."

"I suppose so," sighed Weston, determined to be fair all around. "We had better write to them straight away and ask them to get busy. I'll tell you what!" he exclaimed, brightening. "We'll ask them to be kind enough to hustle the wedding along a bit, to give uncle an opportunity of being present. That's a good wheeze! It could all be arranged for next month. What say you?"

"Oh, well," she smiled. "You are absolutely hopeless, of course. But I suppose you'll have your own way. And if father and mother agree, I suppose it could be arranged. But that will mean that I'll have to go back home almost at once to get ready."

"We can't have everything in this sad, weary world, I suppose," sighed Weston. "So I suppose I'll have to agree to that under the circumstances. But here is uncle coming back."

"Sergeant Wilson told us to go on up to the hotel, and he would get the luggage collected, and see that it got up safely," remarked Lord Ernemount as soon as he had joined them. "Well, my dear," he continued, turning to Betty, "I have hardly had time to look at you yet. Betty is your name, isn't it? I always gave Richard credit for possessing good sense, and I perceive that he is still living up to my opinion of him." At which subtle compliment Betty blushed again.

On their way up to the Palace, Weston briefly explained their immediate future plans to his uncle, who was in hearty agreement.

Having entered the hotel office, and stepped up to the desk, Weston announced to the clerk:

"This is my uncle, Jack."

"Pleased to meet you. Any relative of

the inspector's is sure welcome around here," he said handsomely, holding out a hospitable hand.

"Thank you very much," smiled Lord Ernemount, as he heartily shook Jack's hand. "I'd better sign the register, I suppose?"

"Right here, please."

Jack watched the new guest write "Ernemount" in the space indicated, then he looked up and became aware of the girl.

"Well, well!" he cried. "If it ain't Miss Elliott! Welcome to our city, miss. You all right?"

"Quite, thank you," she smiled, shaking hands. "I also want a room."

"That's sure fine. I have got a couple of the best rooms vacant. You had better take twenty-two, and I'll give you twenty-four, Mr. Ernemount. They's easily the two best rooms in the hotel."

They all smiled at Jack's novel form of addressing an English peer; and having thanked him, they turned and commenced climbing the stairs, Weston volunteering to show them their rooms.

Shortly after they had disappeared, Wilson entered the office.

"Hey, Jack!" he shouted. "Which are Miss Elliott's and Lord Ernemount's rooms? I have a pile of luggage for them on a van outside."

"Lord who, did you say?"

"Lord Ernemount. The inspector's uncle, you know."

Jack champed his chewing-gum in reflective silence for a moment.

"Say, is Weston's uncle a lord?"

"You said it. He's the Earl of Ernemount."

"You ain't kiddin' me by any chance?"

"'Course I'm not, you chump!"

Again Jack pondered, his teeth making soft, rhythmical clicks as he diligently ground the gum between them.

"Well," he remarked at last. "I never had much use for earls an' dooks, an' things like that. But I guess they ain't so dusty after all, when you get to know 'em closer. Anyhow, Weston's uncle looks a regular guy, lord or no lord!"

And having paid that handsome tribute to the English aristocracy, he deftly turned his gum over in his mouth with a click of finality, and set about arranging for the disposal of the luggage.

THE SNUBLINE SNAKE

In the forests where the axes ring and the logs are rushed to white water, dangerous feats come to be looked upon as all in the day's work. But there is a thrill that never fails in the job of the man who drives the team down the snub-line-pitch—because he is gambling with death.

J. ALLAN DUNN



*Come, all ye wild white-water men and listen to
my lay,
Come, all ye brad-boot buccaroons that draw your
hard-earned pay;
Come, gather round the wangan stove, light up
your pipes and stay;
While I tell ye of the time we had on last
Thanksgivin' Day.
Wango-way! Wango-way!
Shango— dangorango— shango— dangowango-
way!*

WALTER TYLER, known to a few familiars as "Wattie," to the woodsmen as "White Water Wat," stepped out into the twitch road with his

lips tightening in a grim line while he listened to the lumber chanty that one of his teamsters was trolling out light-heartedly to the February woods, as he hauled five thousand feet of spruce to the yards that were being made up from the felled timber, preparatory to delivery to the river landings in readiness for the great Spring Drive.

Wat Tyler had been a woodsman long before he began to cut on his own account. Nowadays he only made swift, unexpected trips of inspection to his wangan camp during the winter, appearing sometimes behind a fast team that came jangling along the tote roads, summoned to straighten out a snarl beyond the skill and authority of his bosses to handle. On the drive, White Water Wat was always predominant, seeing that the ledges were properly carded of stray and stranded logs, the "jill-pokes," treacherous logs with ends thrust deep into banks, projecting into the stream, cleaned up, and giving swift judgment on jams, whether for dynamite or the longer, but more economical "knitting work" that located the key log and peavied it out.

A driver, Wat Tyler, but a man who understood every detail of his business. Good yet with axe or "webbings," with peavy and pickpole. He could still handle a team or ride a birling log with the best of them. He made them earn their pay, but there was mutual respect between master and men. The grub in the wangan camps was first-class and the cooks good. He never asked them to do a thing that he had not done or could not do himself, and his decisions were quick and accurate.

Big spruce or down pine, logs, splits, shakes, shingles, Tyler knew it all by the education of hard experience, from cruising the virgin stand to seeing the dripping logs ride up the slips of the sawmills to be planked and trimmed and divided. All of it a complicated, carefully calculated and carried out campaign against the domain and the regiments of King Spruce, a man's game, where men fought against the elements and often fought with each other, a turbulent band of hardy warriors, up in the dark of freezing mornings, sweating or half-frozen in slush and snows and sleet, wading in furious maelstroms of icy water, risking limb and life in breaking jams, battling for white-water rights and emerging some time in early summer to break loose in a pandemonium of loose-living, drinking healths or settling grudges and better-

manships, dancing powder out of their brogans and spilling the wages of six months in six days and nights.

A man's game, and Tyler had played it all—was still playing it—as master, not as man.

By virtue of ownership, of tax titles and leased stumpage rights, his little army was to deliver, on ice and highwater landings, five million feet of lumber ready for the spring floods to melt the frozen streams and move the logs, all branded with Tyler's registered mark of Diamond T.

A hundred axe-tossers had been sent into the woods. Supplies had gone along the main tote roads to old camps or new ones in the "stand" where log shacks were built for main, cook and bunk camps and the offices of the squad bosses. Now came the hauling-in of the timber by the teamsters down the twitch-roads that led from the various cutting centers to the main trails for the landings. Tyler had planned it all, knowing every detail. There had been bad weather, and there was a chance of his being late. An early spring threatened; Tyler watched his weather forecasts and made others of his own, based upon woodlore gathered first-hand.

He had rigged Jumping River with a succession of dams. The precious freshets must be harnessed, not wasted. In their normal rush they would leave half his logs stranded, or sweep out through and under jams, and leave him cursing at the mean water level that could not carry the cut.

When the ice melted the great logs were floated to the dams, herded by his peavymen. Then they were sluiced through with head of water enough to carry them downstream and so by sections, to still-water. It was imperative that all the five million feet should be piled on the landings without delay. He needed all his men then, they must not be a divided army.

THEREFORE Tyler had come hurrying up into the woods to overlook the situation, to solve the problem, to see it through.

His solution was already made. He had looked over the steep banks of the stream, on the shores of ice of which the lumber was to be piled, ready for the spring rise of the water. And he found a place by which he could cut off two miles of hauling and save time and wages, lessening his ex-

penses by almost a dollar a thousand feet.

Such a cut-off, where the loads would be halted and diverted to a steep slope down which they would be half-hauled, half-lowered, checked by a heavy cable hooked to the back of the sleds and slowly paid out around a stout post, was called a snubline, or snubrope switch, a perilous undertaking fraught with many dangers, and calling for expert teamstership and clever handling of the hawser. This operation Tyler determined upon carrying out under his own superintendence, taking himself an expert's part as brakeman to the rope when it slipped and threatened to "sluice" the load—to send it hurtling down the steep slope as a log is sluiced through rapids.

He made careful survey, laying out his various slants and pitches that would have to be cleared of timber by the swampers of his crew, whose business it was ordinarily to clean proposed log roads of all underbrush, to swamp them free of obstacles. He had to choose a place where the natural grades were not too steep and where the sleds could be gradually "trigged" or braked by hay spread thick upon the final levels into which the runners would sink and fiction be checked.

Such places were not always to be found, and Tyler felt complacent over his discovery. Using the cut-off, he figured that each sled could make five round trips upon it daily. It was money in his pocket, precious time saved, his contracts assured. His orders were given already to the swampers. He had now to pick his boss teamster.

One man was best, if he could be found, to take all teams down the perilous passage. He had to be a man of preëminent skill, a past master with horses, having their confidence, and confidence in himself. A man of cool head, quick decision and strength.

That man was Jerry Magee, who had never calked or cast a horse, who knew every trick and turn of twitch-road work, of outhauling and delivery to the yards. A prince of teamsters—if he were sober.

Magee had never lost control of a team under any conditions. Above all, he had handled snub-pitches and had never been sluiced. Such a happening might not be a teamster's fault. A rope might break, might slip too suddenly about the snubbing post, get free of control. But, once sluiced, the nerviest of drivers lost some-

thing of the consummate nerve that was vital to the operation, when an instant's hesitation or a wrong judgment spelled disaster.

Jerry Magee was the man—if he were sober.

And Magee, accepting top wages—and a little better than the scale—offered a bonus, had sworn a mighty oath to touch none of the liquor that still found a way into the wangan camps, peddled by bootleggers who bought it from the men who fetched it across the line. That, and rum distilled in the blueberry swamps by the derelicts that haunted the woods, selling their berries at a few cents a quart, fired the brush to make the crop grow better and, sometimes, it was said, burned valuable timber.

And here was Magee, necessary to carry out the short-cut strategy, coming down the twitch road, singing at the top of his voice—and the voice not that of a sober man.

*You bet the cook he spread himself an' spread
the table too,
It fairly groaned with cake an' pie an' good old
ven'son stoo;
An' you can bet that what we et, we washed it
down with brew
That never saw a customs' man or paid the
revenool
Wango-way! Wango—*

Wat Tyler, from knitted cap and plaid mackinaw to his greased brad-boots, looked every inch a woodsmaster. His face had never lost its tan, his nose was like the beak of an owl, and he had the eyes of a wolf, amber colored, that could be as cold as yellow ice or hot as leaping flame. His glance was cold now as he stood, broad-shouldered, stocky, tense, with his nose tip coming down over his hardset lips, listening to the drunken song. Tyler never shaved in the woods, and chin and cheeks and upper lip were as blue as if they had been stained with woad, after the fashion of those early woodsmen, the Druids.

The song stopped, changed to a curse, there came the crack of a whip, a volley of foul oaths.

The team showed round the long curve of the twitch-road—horses' heads high; angry, fighting against curb and lash, eyes showing the whites, nostrils red as poppy petals, teeth gleaming. Jerry Magee swearing at them, thonging the hides that were glossy, for all the sweat of their arduous, willing labor.

THE snow was packed on the trail, but deep to either side, crusted on top but soft beneath. There was a slight incline, and the runner tracks were slick as polished steel. The load swung down on the team as they lunged under word and whip, the pole thrusting at them. There was a hook at the end of the pole, for hauling hitches.

The nigh horse reared, snorting, indignant. It came down astride the pole, shouldering its mate into the bank of snow. In an instant there was confusion, tangled harness, one horse cast, the other standing, slashed by the hook, hot red blood spurting from the wound. Magee climbed down, sobered. Tyler racing down the twitch-road, his yellow eyes blazing—more like an angry lion's than a wolf's for the moment.

"You damned sculch! A fine horse ruined! And you call yourself a teamster! One cut and the other calked," he went on in mounting rage, as he saw the fetlock of the cast horse. A team out of commission at this time. Get out of here and let a man handle it. You're fired! Go get your check!"

Magee stood scowling, sullen, his face scarlet with passion, his brains fumed with the liquor he had just finished before he started his song, tossing the flask away.

White Water Wat to come on the job like this! Sneakin' up on a man, like he always did. He could have got away with the accident to the woods-boss. He was teamster-boss, anyway. And no man better with horses.

Fired! For ruining a team. The story of it to go through all the wangans, follow him everywhere. He saw Tyler working at the severed vein, splashed scarlet, making a crude tourniquet, using hair from the horse's own tail to tie the pumping artery, while the dumb brute stood trembling and the cast horse floundered in the snow. Wrath at his own clumsiness added fuel to Magee's rage at being bawled out. But he started to help the fallen animal.

"Get out!" roared Tyler. "Leave those horses alone. You've done harm enough. You're through!"

Another team was coming. Tyler shouted to the driver to leave his horses and help him. Ignored, Jerry Magee slunk off, determination slowly crystallizing in him to get even with Tyler. In only that way could he salve the raw wound inflicted on

his self-conceit. It is the instinct of every man to excuse himself, the very insistence of the quiet voice that continually announces that the main fault is within, perversely urges self-justification at all costs.

Jerry Magee had always been a leader in work or sport at the wangans. His name was in more than one of the lumber chanteys. He was proud of his position in the rough fellowship of the larrigan men of the woods. And now he was humbled, shamed. To look for another job at this time of year was simple enough—if he cooked up a tale that would set him in the right. But he knew that his word would not prevail against that of White Water Wat—all men knew him to be just. Wat would not fire a first-class teamster without cause. Sooner or later that cause would get around the camps, and Jerry be publicly stamped as a non-dependable, a drunkard.

DRUNKARD he was, he knew in his heart. He could not resist the smell and the taste and the kick of the stuff. Strong man as he was, here was his vulnerable point. It had been pierced, and now Jerry Magee was no longer a first-class man. He had, temporarily at least, ruined a costly team, the best team belonging to White Water Wat, picked by Jerry himself as boss-teamster.

Even now he did not know how it had happened. It was the hairtrigger stuff that he had got from the bootlegger, through the cookee. It had broken up his controls. One moment he had been singing, the next the team, hauling a little unevenly, had refused instantly to get together, and something had snapped in his brain. It seemed to have scalded with scalding blood. He saw red and lashed the horses that had never known, never needed, more than the crack of a whip above them to do their utmost.

And Tyler, damn him, had had to be there!

Magee was ashamed to go to the time-keeper for his reckoning, ashamed to tell him that he had been fired. But he needed money. He had made up his mind what to do. Rather his mind had set itself, without reasoning, in a sullen resolve.

He would go to the Diggers in the Bushee clearing, a miserable collection of shacks about a long deserted lumber camp,

huts of poles and mud, of crude wicker-work and tarred paper, with chimneys of twigs coated over with clay, degenerate dwellings for degenerate whites.

There was a girl there, wild but not bad looking, with black hair, a comely figure and a bold eye that Magee had noticed. She was slatternly, like the rest of them, dressed in a faded, ragged gown, but she had youth and grace and feminine allurements for Magee in his present mood.

He'd go and hide out with the Bushees. He could get some decent grub, and he could buy the fiery product of their pot-stills. And, some way, watching and contriving, he'd find a way to get even with Wat before the drive started.

How, he did not yet know. He might destroy important dams, he might even set a fire, but the woodsman instinct in him repudiated that last suggestion. He would not destroy valuable timber that way, even to spite Tyler. But there would be some way.

He glared at the chaney-man—the camp clerk, time-keeper, overseer of the wangan store, and supply accountant all in one; the only man in the camps who did not have to get up before sunrise, the only man in the outfit to come out in the spring without callouses.

Lawrence was the chaney-man's name. Peter Lawrence, and he had been at his job for almost forty years. He was an ancient as lumbermen go, close to sixty, more than a little bald and a little deaf, with failing sight that called for a change of lenses every year and did not always get them, touched with rheumatism, close to the limits of his usefulness.

Even for old acquaintance sake Tyler could not have kept Lawrence on but for his assistant. The chaney-man knew every side of his job, but his duties were apt to include quick trips to half a dozen camps on snowshoes or a ding-swing—the trimmed fork of a tree with a runner on the peak, a famous vehicle for snowy wood trails.

This assistant was Lawrence's granddaughter, a girl of eighteen, not yet the toast of the wangan, but often spoken of with respect and liking, the mascotte of the outfit. Blue of eyes and brown of hair and merry of heart was Mary Lawrence, efficient as any man clerk in handling stores and pay accounts, a true woods-girl, adept on snowshoes or driving the

shaggy gray horse that drew the ding-swing.

In all the woods there was no one to harm her, she traveled the trails as freely and safely as a boy. If anyone injured her, insulted her, there were a hundred men keen to avenge her, wipe out the insult and leave the offender pulp. To Peter Lawrence she was at once the prop of his old age, the savior of his salary-check—though she drew one of her own and never knew that the double pay was quiet charity from Tyler—and the apple of the old man's eye.

To Jerry Magee she was the most desirable thing in the world.

There had been a time when he believed he might have won her, being a proper man enough, good to look at, if a bit too swift to boast. But the summer before she had seen him, drunk and fighting, smashing a brutal fist into a bloody face, striking his man down and kicking him in the ribs.

IT WAS true that the man had spiked Magee deliberately in the beginning of a drunken brawl, but the thing permitted no explanation to the girl. Magee had seen the girl flinch as she had come down the wooden sidewalk of the logging town and seen the pair fighting in the middle of a gang that had broken out from the doors of a grog shanty, in the midst of a cheering throng, to finish the quarrel in the open. He had a brief glimpse of the blue eyes in disgusted recognition as, with the swift judgment and condemnation of seventeen, she decided that Jerry Magee was not the chivalrous woodsman she had thought him. Since then he had striven to regain his place in her esteem and, a week ago, had established her interest in him, by promising her that, because she asked him, he would never take another drop.

That brought them close together again, might have given him hope but for the hiring of Teddy Nolan.

Nolan was younger than Magee at the woods game, but he was almost as good a teamster. Magee acknowledged that, grudgingly, to himself, though he affected to regard the other as a Newcomer with lots to learn. Given a little more experience, another season or two to cope with all the unexpected tricks the woods and the weather played on the invaders of their kingdom; and Nolan would be the equal

of Magee. He had as firm and light a hand and as strong a one on the webbing, he knew the capacity of a horse, he talked horse language. He could coax them to put another hundred pounds of thrust into their collars in emergency, while, under the magic of voice and chirrup, he jockeyed them and sent them surging forward as one to work on evenly, each a perfect help to its mate. "Never balked and never balked," could be said of the teams handled by Teddy Nolan—of Magee's also, until today.

Nolan had a better disposition than the deposed boss-teamster. He could fight upon occasion, but he was not quarrelsome and preferred a jest to a threat. He was broad of shoulders and narrow of waist, the best dancer and singer of them all. Strength he had, and patience, and he did not seek to carry the maidenly defenses of Mary Lawrence by a *tour de force*, as Magee might. Nolan was shy in the presence of the girl who was heart-free, for all that she had been once intrigued with the attentions of Jerry Magee and for all her appreciation of Teddy Nolan's clean youth.

She was the friend of all the men, axetossers, swamper, teamsters, from White Water Wat himself down to the despised cookees—assistants to the cook. She was profoundly interested in the work, knowing in lumber lore, keen for the interests of the outfit.

Now she, thought Magee, working beside her grandfather in the wangan store, saving him a thousand steps, covering up his slowness and his frailties, must see him as he asked for his time and his check, know he had been fired and look on him with scornful eyes, knowing him to have broken his promise.

He cursed the bootlegger who had tempted him, cursed cookee as the go-between. The liquor was well over a hundred proof, raw and new. The men called it Furlong Hootch, claiming it could be smelled upon the breath at that distance and would drop the average man before he had traveled that distance after freely imbibing.

Magee had bought two quarts, in four flat flasks, persuading himself that he was laying in a supply against emergencies. It had gone, like the flowing current of a river, but there was one flask left, tucked under the mattress of his bunk.

He went to the bunkhouse first to get

his effects together. First of all he retrieved the flask. The sight of it, the gurgle of the liquor in the little empty space beneath the cork, brought his appetite leaping out. His membranes watered for it, his throat ached for the swift sear of it. It was at once a panacea and a stiffener of his self-respect.

He took out the cork and the smell rushed out, overpowering, masterful.

"Aw, to hell with 'em all," he said aloud, and tilted back his head.

Half an hour later he swaggered down to the wangan store, still steady on his feet, but with his eyes set and fiery, blood-shot in the whites, reckless of anyone but Jerry Magee, with the devil in him looking for trouble.

Out we come from the Allegash

he trolled at the top of his lungs, tramping along, his assembled goods in a pack on his broad back.

*Nothin' left behind but slash,
Bellies full of booze and hash
Whoop fa jingo!
Jugs of rum!*

Peter Lawrence knew that chantey with its string of verses that grew cruder with every stanza, and he peered out of the side window of the store through his thick-lensed glasses to see who came roaring it through the camp. Mary Lawrence knew nothing of it, but her intuition guessed at its character.

Her grandfather turned to her, face and voice puzzled.

"It's Magee, Mary," he said. "You'd better not stay 'round here."

"If it's Magee, I'll stay," she said, confident of her ability to control the teamster, though there was a suggestion of recklessness in his voice, aside from his selection of the ribald song, that she had never heard before. There was scant time for argument. To leave meant that Magee would see her, surmise that she was running away from him, and might precipitate insult that she otherwise could check.

Her grandfather opened a drawer that was back of the counter dividing the store proper from the space where customers stood. His nervous hand, shaking as much with age as excitement, felt for the butt of a gun that he had never fired.

Magee came inside, shirt open at the throat, veins in neck and face swollen, his breath reeking with alcohol. He had prepared himself for a sight of the girl, the liquor had hardened him.

"Gimme my check and gimme it quick!" he bawled. "I'm through with this outfit. Tyler may think he knows more about horses than I do, but thinkin' never shod a mule. Make up my time, Petie, an' take out what I owe the wangan."

As Lawrence somewhat shakily fumbled with his books his granddaughter spoke to him.

"Let me do that, granddad. I can do it quicker than you can."

There was scorn in the suggestion of needed speed to get rid of him that nettled Magee. He dropped his pack, set truculent elbows on the counter and thrust his face over it toward the girl as she swiftly made out his account and filled in a pay-check.

"Think I'm drunk, don't you?" he asked. "Well, I am, good an' drunk. An' I'll stay that way as long as I damn please."

She raised her head and looked at him steadily. There was a cold light of contempt in her eyes that touched Magee on the quick. He half-flinched, but the liquor had destroyed his ordinary controls. Her glance maddened him.

"Think I'm plain scum an' sculch, not good enough to breathe the same air as you, don't you?" he demanded. Lawrence plucked her by the arm, but she set him away and stood where he had stood, behind the half-opened drawer.

"Your manners were never good," she said evenly. "Now they are offensive as—as your breath."

If she had been older she would have worded that speech differently. For a moment she wanted to turn and run as she saw the hellish blaze that leaped up in the eyes of Magee—or rather, in the eyes of the subconscious, primitive beast that the liquor had unloosed while it drugged the real man in stupor. The word offensive puzzled him for a second, crazed him.

"Don't like my breath, eh? Well, I'll make you like it."

With an action as swift as that of a wildcat he set his flat hands on the counter, ready for the springing vault that would carry him over. There was that in his eyes now that was worse than murder to the girl. But there was a strain in her

that responded to the danger that she faced. She put back of her, with her left hand, the check she had filled out.

"Sign it, granddad, quick," she said while Magee's shoulder muscles writhed under his mackinaw like a bunch of snakes as they gathered for the leap. The whites of his eyes were suddenly mapped by red veins, the pupils showed crimson, his mouth was open. A scream rose to the girl's lips and she choked it back. All that was feminine in her wanted to flee. Reason told her that meant fatality, that, not only she would know a horror that seemed to loom like an awful phantom, but that her grandfather, trying to protect her, would be swept away, beaten, battered before the brute that Magee now was. Courage took command, rallied the trembling forces of her nerves.

His feet tiptoed, the vault half-launched, Magee recoiled before the only thing that might have stopped him, the muzzle of a gun, held unwaveringly less than six inches from his forehead, the cold black hole of it more menacing than the head of a deadly snake. The girl's arm was steady.

The blue blaze of her eyes showed back of the sights, gun and arm aligned. Memory, spurred by peril, told him that she could shoot. He had seen her practising, not with this gun, but with the one she sometimes carried when she went into the woods, more to assure her grandfather than from any need of it.

HE SAW, woodsman that he was, with eyes keen as a hawk's, despite the fumes that had been in large measure overcome by the rally secretions of his body, acting automatically in the face of death; that she had taken up the trigger's slack, he saw the butt snuggled into her little resolute palm, the cocked trigger, the bunching of the flesh back of the juncture of thumb and forefinger that told of the perfect squeeze that, completed, would send a bullet crashing into his brain before he could even start to strike the gun aside.

Death, backed by honor, shone in her eyes. His blood chilled, retreated to his heart. A shudder ran through his great frame.

"I reckon you've got me where you want me," he said dully. "Shoot if you want to. Damn you, shoot!"

Here was not a curse so much as the appeal of a man who suddenly saw a vision

of himself as he had fashioned his own destiny, a glimpse of a future bleak as a corridor in hell. In the girl's eyes he saw his true reflection and his soul, knowing itself damned, asking for dismissal. For the moment he could have welcomed the bullet. It was the last speech of Magee's manhood. He would go out from the wangan store an outlaw to decency, despised by the one being whose opinion his better self cherished.

"Give him his check, granddad." The woman, now awakened fully in the girl, read the man, feeling for him sorrow leavening her resolution, weakening it. Magee was harmless now, but she did not lower the gun.

He took the strip of paper, shouldered his pack and went out without word or glance, crushing the check into the pocket of his mackinaw. He had meant to get Lawrence to cash it. Now he had no thought but to get away.

White Water Wat made a speech to his men that night, after eating with them at the same table their own rough, muscle-replenishing food, rather than the special meal that the cook wanted to prepare, or the one to which his chaney-man had invited him.

The talk was outside where a big fire blazed. Lawrence and his daughter were there, everyone in the camp, to listen to the Big Boss.

"Mild spring coming, boys," he said. "I feel it in my bones. The sign is plain in the woods, even the weather-sharps agree with me. And we don't want it to catch us late. I've got a contract to deliver our logs on time. I've got a contract for lumber that depends on getting the logs down to Stillwater Bend in time, and up the slips to the band-saws. If we don't I'll be under heavy penalties. You've worked with me before, a whole lot of you. You don't want me to lose out. Tyler's men never fell down on a contract yet.

"That's my own boast. Back in the settlements they say Tyler never fell down, but I know that's because of Tyler's men. It's the outfit that counts, not the individual, and the spirit of the outfit is what wins. I know yours. I've banked on it. I am banking on it.

"That's why I came down here, just to make myself feel better by seeing the way you've been going to it. Some folks call

me a driver. I know better. The best driver in the world can't make a balky team win the race. And I've got the best team in the woods with this outfit.

"When Nature tries to play a trick on you you've got to go her one better. You all know the big bend in Tumbling River. There's a stiff slope there that'll save us a mile and a half of haul if we make a snubline-pitch out of it. I've looked it over and the swamper's'll tackle it tomorrow. They'll have it in shape by the time the rest of you are through yarding at the end of the twitch-roads. We'll snub down, we'll save time and distance and labor, and we'll beat our own contract.

"There's another thing I haven't told you. Told you about the penalties, but a good contract's got other things besides penalties, and I made a good contract. There's a bonus clause to it for what we call pre-delivery. You help me earn that bonus, and you'll share it. Every bully man Jack of you."

HE stood smiling, like a little Napoleon of the woods, while his men cheered him, fired by the speech and the spirit of the man. Mary Lawrence stood with shining eyes of admiration. Tyler was her idea of a superman, brain ruling brawn, minting gold from his shaping of others' endeavor; the kind of a man she wanted her man to be, when she found him, the kind of man she would help him to be. Unconsciously her eyes strayed to the figure of Teddy Nolan, cheering with the rest. She wondered, she hoped, that he had this sort of stuff in him. Something told her that he had. That he would be able to see the steps upward, even as Tyler had seen them. The two of them together could find those steps. White Water Tyler had begun at the bottom, without capital. He had been able to inspire confidence, to coin opportunities, to borrow capital until he had made enough of his own for independent enterprise. Why not someone like Nolan? For, in her heart, in the book of her heart with its pages still uncut, unread by herself, she felt that Nolan was written there as her man. And she knew, by a hundred ways of look and action and inflection, that she was his choice.

Tyler held up his hand and the cheering stopped.

"That's all, men, but one thing. I'm

giving Nolan the job of taking down the snub teams. You can give him a cheer if you want to."

There was a cheer, but it was smothered in the good natured rough-housing that followed. Jerry Magee, lurking in the shadows, creeping forward till he stood at the side of the main camp building, drawn back to the news of his own dismissal and the elevation of Teddy Nolan, as a child bites down on an aching tooth, cursed as he heard the cheering. He saw Mary Lawrence, standing with the chane-man, watching Nolan, guessing at her feelings toward the man who had supplanted him in more ways than one; jealousy prompting him.

He was not so drunk but that an idea came to him. It would probably not have materialized had he not been a teamster, and had not Tyler mentioned the snub-line-pitch. In a flash a plan that was almost perfect came to Magee, taking root in the rotten soil of his heart, fertile for such a growth.

He would get even—at one swoop—with Tyler, Nolan and Mary Lawrence.

He had missed little of the way in which she had looked at Teddy Nolan, his own conceit told him that she had once loved him and was now fickle. So he salved the smart of his dismissal, the sear of the scorn in her eyes, the bitterness of his defeat before the gun so steadily held in front of him.

He had seen how she had pressed her grandfather's arm when Nolan's name was mentioned and how her head had gone up proudly when his mates shouted for the new teamster-boss.

Now he would humble them all—he would get rid of Teddy Nolan, get rid of the man who had taken the place from whence he had been flung, get rid of the man Mary Lawrence was in love with, There would be no more of Nolan.

He knew the risks of the snub-pitch trail, none better, the dangers of the bights and loops and the singing stretch of the snubbing hawser, straining to almost breaking point with its heavy load. The snub-rope was a devil, a thing always to be feared. Every outfit had its maimed who had been caught by writhing coils in an instant of carelessness.

He could get away with it and never be suspected.

Tyler would be forced to give up his

time-saving pitch. With Nolan once sluiced the plan would be abandoned.

And, some day, he would get the girl after all.

Few men are consistently bad. Their motives are involved. Even while he meditated despoiling the girl of her lover Magee harbored no thought of personal harm toward her. It was drink that had roused the devil in him and released the mad lust that had possessed him for the moment. And a new respect had been born within him for the chane-man's granddaughter by the way in which she had withstood him. She was one girl in a million and no other man was going to have her. All his will for evil was concentrated upon Nolan, and he slunk back to the Bushee shacks, absorbed in the details of his scheme.

The girl he had noticed before was waiting and willing to take notice of him, but he treated her advances with a scowl. There was only one girl in the world for him and he was going to get her by foul means if he could not by fair. Nolan stood in his way.

THE next day he bought a knife from one of the Diggers, as the outcasts were scornfully called. It was a good bit of well-tempered steel, set in a wooden haft. There was an old grindstone in the ruined camp, worn down by the sharpening of many axes, not worth carting away—but good enough for Magee's purpose. Slowly it shaped the blade as he wanted it and he finished it off with a hone.

Now the blade was barely half an inch in width save at the tip, where it had been made into a flat hook, razor sharp at tip and edges. Magee tested it on his thumb-nail and grinned at its fitness before he took the last swig from a bottle of Digger hootch.

He had kept touch with Tyler's operations. No one had seen him. He imagined that they thought he had left the vicinity, looking for another job. If so, so much the better. It did not make much difference, anyway. He was going to be too smart for anyone to get anything on him. For four days he watched the progress of the swamper in cleaning the snub-pitch trail, able to guess exactly when they would be through with their job, watching the piles of timber grow at the ends of the twitch-roads, knowing how much was to be brought down each one; lurking unseen in

the timber, sneaking back to work on the tool he was preparing.

He was close by when Tyler made inspection of the snubline-pitch and pronounced it satisfactory. There was one steep incline where sixteen hundred feet of three-inch hawser was needed. Below came a series of shelves, almost level and another comparatively gentle slant ending in the natural flats above the stream, the pitches there covered thick with swale hay to brake the heavy loads into full control before they went on to the final landings. The road itself was smoothed. The levels would be wetted down to keep them iced. The difference in actual time of hauling would save Tyler almost a dollar a thousand feet or five dollars a load.

The hawser had arrived—best Manila hemp, flawless, since men's lives depended upon it. It was delivered close to the great beech that had been felled, preparatory to its making into a snub post. This was four feet in height, anchored firmly as a naturally deep-rooted tree. Tyler gave final instructions and two men started to work to adze it until it was smooth as the helve of an axe—an afternoon's work.

The work would start the next morning.

Magee, hidden, hugged himself as he watched the chips fly while the experts planed the post with their sharp edges.

Tomorrow!

A cut-off like this was always something of a desperate venture. Things moved fast there, either for success or disaster. There was the constant zest of risk, the fact that if all went well it meant the bonus for Tyler, their share of it for the men, something to brag about and talk about when they went out in the spring, something that would not need their praise to make it one of the feats that would be long spoken of. The danger made it fascinating to watch. The chief actors would be Teddy Nolan, taking the loads down to safety; the men who paid out the slack, the men who kept the coils free as the main mass of the hawser was let out about the snubbing post, hooked to the load of logs that otherwise, on that steep slope, would overrun the team and send them with their driver to wreckage; and the man who, in case of emergency, braked the rope against the post by main force, checking, even actually holding, the load, with the hawser nipped between the stump and the handle of a cant-dog whose metal nose was set deep

into the roots. This last was to be White Water Wat himself.

Oh, it was all set for the play to start, a woods drama where Death stood ready to be a marplot, represented now by Jerry Magee, his brain sodden with drink, inflamed with steady contemplation of his own ignominies.

The moon rose that night at a little after eight o'clock, sending its silver shafts lancing deep into the woods where Magee went noiselessly on bearpaw snowshoes over the crisp snow, shortcutting to the top of the pitch, squatting by the coil of hawser, lifting its tarpaulin cover, deftly laying out its lengths until he reached the desired spot of his calculations.

It was nine by his watch when he took out the tool he had so carefully fashioned. At that moment the boss would be yelling "lights" in the wangan and, the order instantly obeyed by tired and sleepy men, the camp became dark and still, save for the heavy breathing of the occupants of the rude bunks.

Teddy Nolan would be there—sleeping.

AT TEN o'clock the hawser was recoiled, the tarpaulin recovering it, and Magee went slipping back through the timber. He was primed with corn whisky, there was more waiting for him when he got to his hovel in the Bushees' settlement. No one but himself knew what he had done—would ever know, he assured himself, for he had performed the trick cleverly—and even picked out the place where he could watch what must infallibly happen when the first load came down. His face was evil under the moon, and the breath that came from his mouth, to condense heavily on the frosty air, seemed like the breath of a demon, even as his eyes were those of a fiend.

ALL of the camp that could be, was on hand to see the first load go down to the landing over the snubline-pitch. Tyler, making swift trips to other outposts of his, had returned to this one where the special maneuver was called for to make his campaign a complete success.

And White Water Wat saw victory in sight for another winter. His tree crop was everywhere down, piled on the main roads at the end of the twitch-roads, ready for this final haul to landings. Then there would come a breath in his operations until

spring let loose the waters, and, with one mad, wild herding rush, his logs would go down from dam to dam on the back of the white water. He might be a little ahead, he dared not be behind the first big thaw on account of his precious contract and its bonus.

The chaney-man was there with his granddaughter, the cook and the cookee. Mary Lawrence had slipped into the stables the night before and tied bright red ribbons into the bridles of Nolan's team. He had found them there in the morning, before sunup, when he harnessed for the day.

There was no question whence came the decorations. The girl had evaded his questions, she had teased him, she had left him hanging between hope and despair the night before, telling him how she expected to marry a man who would be a second White Water Wat, and Nolan, with the words hot in his mouth to tell her of his own ambitions and his own surety of success, said nothing for fear of her laughter.

Because of that he had not slept as much as he should have the night before, considering the fact that today he would need all his nerve to handle the teams down the slope. But here, without speaking, she had sent him a message, and he whistled as he hitched the grays and told them how proud they should be.

They seemed proud enough as they came into sight, leading the long procession of the teams that would form an endless chain all day, bringing each their five thousand foot loads from the twitch-yards to the top of the snubline-pitch.

Down full and back empty, to reload and come again, Wat Tyler estimated every team could make five rounds of it. There were men at the foot of the pitch with cant-dog, peavy and pole to get the lumber yarded for the last time before the ice went out, and the logs with it. There were men at the twitch-yards to help load, men to keep swale hay deep on the lower end of the pitch and trig the sleds, men to ice the levels, men to pay out the coiled hawser and see that it ran smoothly to the two postmen who worked the turns about the post and paid out the slack, their hands armoured with great mits of leather.

There was White Water Wat Tyler, watchful of all details, standing by the snubbing-post, cant-dog in hand, ready to brake, keen to watch the hawser continually lest the slightest strand show severed

by edge of rock, or stick chisel-edged by a swamper's axe, even by a tobacco tin carelessly tossed aside or a fragment of broken glass. Tin and glass seemed slight risks here, but they were possible ones, and one broken strand might start to uncoil in a flying spiral that would unwind and weaken the hawser to a swift breaking, sluice team and driver—to use the woods term for a load set free from a cable holding it back on a slope—send them crashing to death, to a pulp of flesh and a sprinkling of red blood on splintered logs.

Nolan had the first load made up of his own sled and team by right of his new position. Then, as each team came to the top of the pitch, the horses snorting, inclined to plunge and rear, looking askance with rolling eyes, pricked ears and crimson nostrils at the descent, knowing what was ahead of them, the driver would step aside. The one man, chosen to minimize all chance of accident, would soothe the teams as they went flounderingly down the descent, dreading to loose their feet, sensing that a rope held them back, but far more fearful of its protection than of that of the man who talked their language, called them by their names, assured them it was all right and gave out confidence along his tested web-bings that was transmitted to them as surely as ever electricity travels along a wire.

THERE are some men who are born with the power, whose touch on the mouths of horses may lie as light as velvet and yet have the strength of steel, who anticipate what a horse thinks, know his reactions, coax and urge, bully and ask, knowing the differences between the temperaments of the willing beasts who all will do their best for the one who understands.

Magee was a man like this, but Tyler began to think he had a better in Nolan, a thought that came comfortingly as he carefully noted Nolan's driving in the few days preceding the cut-off switch.

Four turns were made around the snubbing post. Nolan, his every effort concentrated on the job ahead of him—after one swift side-glance at the girl—drove ahead to where the hawser was hooked to his load.

Wat Tyler barked crisp orders. Danger was in the air, ready to swoop. The turns on the post had to be kept in place, slack had to be given them properly, the cable passed out evenly, fed by the hawser men

who paid out from the main coil. Between post and coil there were bights as deadly as the coils of an enormous boa. The whole hawser had the unleashed deviltry of a mammoth serpent that might break loose at any moment when least expected, that was always ready to do some mischief in its resentment at control and usage. There was no man present who did not know of some poor devil caught in a jerking bight, dragged and smashed against the snubbing-post, ground into eternity. The girl had heard something of such tales. The air seemed charged with the imminent possibilities of disaster, to be held off only by tremendous, everlasting vigilance and the puny muscles of men set against friction, commanded by White Water Wat.

He looked every inch the leader as he cast a final glance over everything and spoke to Teddy Nolan.

"Ready?"

"All Ready."

"Let her go! Give him slack there. Go ahead!"

The cook gave a cheer and cookee echoed it, as in duty bound. Mary Lawrence, in an impulse appreciated by all who saw or heard of it, her heart doubly bound up in the success of White Water Wat, her first hero, and the man she had not yet acknowledged as her lover, leaped lightly on the load and sat sideways on a log, gripping a binding chain that held the logs in place.

"I'll be the mascotte of your snubline, Mr. Tyler," she cried gaily, and he nodded at her genially. She was a woods-girl. She would not lose her head. Nolan gave no sign that his load had suddenly become priceless to him. The cook and cookee cheered again, but their voices were drowned in the huzza of the post and coil men and the nearest teamsters waiting the turn of their loads.

The girl smiled at all and waved one hand as she felt the grays, young, powerful beasts with the dapples plain on their glossy hides, settle against tugs and collars.

Halfway down the pitch, Magee, crouched in the snow, watching from behind the bole of a tree. He could not see the top of the pitch, he was being very careful about his concealment, hazardous in the wintry woods, but he could not resist seeing the tragedy he had planned. He was keyed up by thoughts of revenge in his brain amid fumes of crude alcohol from the Bushee pot-still. He grinned at the cheering, guess-

ing it started partly for Nolan, mostly for White Water Wat.

"Hoorayin' for the bonus they ain't goin' to get," he muttered. "The creepin' time-servers."

The coils about the post began to whine, to squeak and squeal as they took up the load with Nolan holding his team in and chirruring to them, the bits checked with his steady hand, the lines wires of communication between his spirit and theirs.

The pitch had been graded as well as possible, roots cleared from it and the snow packed down hard. Smooth as the surface seemed, it had its inequalities when the load would lurch and the coils shriek as they jerked loose and ran, hissing, smoking hot through the leather mittens, while all the loosened length of the coil seemed suddenly vibrant with life and mischief, looping, yielding.

THEN White Water Wat thrust the iron nose of his cant-dog deep into and between the roots of the post and swung his weight and muscle on the handle, levering back, gripping the hawser between the stout ashen staff and the groaning beech stump, checking the slip, holding back the load as Nolan talked to his team, stilling their swift panic, keeping them even in their collars by strength and a certain knack that few could master.

Slowly the hawser paid out and the load went down the slope. The girl was balanced lightly on the top log, waving her handkerchief, the three-inch rope vibrated, sang with a note that changed at every shift of pull. It was a sinister song it sang, shrieking with protest on the post, twanging like a harp when a coil jerked and the feeding out process slipped, with Tyler shouting to the post men and the men at the coil, watching the length eagerly—anxiously.

There was a little pucker between his brows that deepened. He could detect nothing wrong on the surface, but the song of the hempen snake was not to his liking. It had given and, suddenly, he saw the great twist flatten as it passed over the post, like a suddenly deflating tube.

He gave a shout and drove his cant-dog home, swaying back, knowing instantly that there was something faulty in the inner lay of the cable.

Magee heard the shout and chuckled. He was crouching back of his tree on the far side lest someone sight him, not daring

to peer out beyond the bole, waiting for the team to come within his vision. He had calculated his hiding place to a nicety. The load would come opposite to him just as the part of the cable whose core he had so skilfully weakened with his knife-hook would pass the stump. It was there now, in a moment it would—

Nolan heard the cry, knew that something had happened. The sudden check accentuated the warning, but it was the quality of the shout that told him that Tyler had seen frightful, imminent danger—perhaps a gash in the rope.

He flung a cry over his shoulder to the girl, his blood running cold.

"Mary! For God's sake, jump!"

Her face had blanched. Others were yelling at her to leap clear from the doomed load. For the moment she was paralyzed with the swift change from exhilaration to apprehension. Something had gone wrong—

Then she saw a figure leaping from behind a tree, gesticulating wildly.

It was Magee. His wildest thought had never placed the girl on the load, until he heard her name and sprang from concealment in a revulsion, a panic.

He had killed her—unless she jumped.

He joined his voice to the rest, standing, a wild figure on the edge of the slope, exposed, forgetful of anything but the girl he had condemned.

All came with almost the swiftness of a lightning stroke.

The hawser sagged, lengthened, tore apart, breaking from Tyler's desperate pinching at the post. The serpent was free. It came leaping down the slope in great spirals after the load as the horses started forward in a great leap.

The girl shrieked, fascinated, hypnotized at the sight of the thrashing hawser, afraid to leap, clinging to the chain, lest she be clutched in the coils that sent the snow flying like spray as they whipped it.

The runners of the sled squealed, the pole lifted. It took the heavy horses clean off their feet.

Now the sled was out of command, the logs chafing in the bind chains, tossing, protesting, the load a projectile hurtling down the pitch.

For a moment Mary saw the face of Magee, like a face seen in a nightmare, horrible, the mouth open. Below it, his limbs moved like the limbs of a marionette.

She heard Nolan's voice, charged with agony, but deep, masterful.

"Steady, Ben! Pete! Steady!"

He leaned forward, his arms like bands of steel, his eyes like balls of polished granite, lifting ever so slightly on the horses' bits, as their great hooves struck the ground, found footing.

He knew that he was sluced. He knew that Mary Lawrence was clinging to the bind-chain back of him, guessed at the awful sight to her of that spiraling hawser leaping down after them like a frenzied monster. And he forced all this from his mind to the task ahead of him. There was just a chance, just the barest chance, that his skill and the love and confidence that existed between him and his team might win.

THEY were his own horses. He had fed them, rubbed them down, tended them, kept their feet in shape, anxious for sign of strain, for puff or chafe, talked to them, petted them until they would turn their heads toward him long before they could see him, nuzzling and sniffing at him before they even thrust their muzzles at the grain he brought them.

Now was the time to test that friendship, if he could only stay their panic. In their footing, their speed, the strength of their muscles and sinews lay that possible salvation.

Straight ahead he looked, a prayer going up for the girl behind him. He saw nothing of Magee.

If the girl had leaped he might have followed her, but duty called to him as well as love in that first tremendous second. His team would have been killed, mangled, without his control.

The load gained speed with every few feet as the pole lunged and thrust them off their feet in sickening plunges. Each time, with his voice calling to them, his hands on the lines, arms out, keeping the precise degree of tautness, he helped them get their momentary footing, kept the rushing road in the smooth narrow way, trees and ledges sweeping by, snow flying like smoke.

Below lay the shelves, great stairs that they must take in flying leaps. The slightest swerve might mean destruction, horrible death. The end of the trail seemed to leap up to meet them. The pole came up, the big horses upheaved, futile as blind

puppies. Down—and on their feet.

There came a jerk. The hawser had caught in something. It felt to Nolan as if the cable must have twined about a tree—and uprooted it. It swerved the load and, with a sickening fear that this was the end, he swung on the lines, desperately fighting, calling, to bring the team straight as they struck the first of the shelves and the weighted sled seemed to leave the ground, rocketing forward, landing—in the fairway with the team splaying for a footing.

It seemed to him afterward that that jerking check had saved them, after all. Otherwise the team would have landed on a different level from the load for the shelves were of varying widths. They must have been swept from their feet, but now they flew ahead, the load bumping, the bind-chains holding, flashing on to where the thick hay braked the runners as they bit into it and, groaning, creaking, they halted.

The smoking team stood with heads down, the vapor of their labored breath ruffling hay and snowdust, their sides heaving as Nolan turned to see if the girl was safe. Her face was set in so wild a horror that he stared in the fear that the wild ride had driven her mad. He had counted on her nerve—he knew that now. Had it failed her?

He saw men racing down the sides of the slope, massing in one spot. The girl turned staring eyes toward him, then she covered her face with her hands and collapsed on the logs, shaken with sobs while he tried to comfort her, patting her awkwardly, conscious of his clumsiness.

At last she lifted her face, wet with tears, her eyes still holding horror, but no longer mad, recognizing him, something in them shining through that made his heart leap.

"You didn't see it!" she said in a tense whisper. "Magee—! Teddy, oh, you were wonderful. Take me, Teddy!"

He took her into his arms atop the load while the horses labored for their breath and found it. She lay there comforted, head on his shoulder. Now he stroked her cheek, asking no questions, content. With her eyes closed as if to shut up a vision that persisted, she clung to him and lifted her lips to his.

HE came out of the trees," said one of the teamsters, "actin' like he was crazed, leapin' like a jumpin' jack. It was you he was after, Nolan, 'count you'd got his job. He figured on sluicin' you, but he hadn't figured the gel was goin' to be on that load.

"Served him right, for a bloody murderer, but it was sure a God-awful wind-up. Hawser went a-spinnin' down after you an' jest like it was a snake reaching out for the man that 'ud knifed it. Like one of them octopuses you read about, it was. Twisted round Magee and flung him like he was a straw.

"I wouldn't swear if the hawser ever straightened out. I jest see him whirlin' through the air an' then—*bash*, he hits a tree t'other side. Head might have been a rotten punkin! He was in a loop, seemed like, and it twisted round his throat. Hard to say was he choked first. There ain't no evidence, to speak of."

WESTON OF THE MOUNTED PROVES HIMSELF MAN-SIZE
IN

"RED COATED LAW"

Another swell novel by T. LUND

(Author of "Beyond the Barrrens")

IN THE APRIL ISSUE OF

COMPLETE NORTHWEST NOVEL

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ALSO IN THE SAME ISSUE—

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WATCH-DOGS OF

SOME TRUE FACTS TAKEN FROM

THE Royal Northwest Mounted Police force of Canada is a combination of all sorts and conditions of men blown together by the round-up of the winds of heaven. In the ranks we find young graduates from Harvard and Rugby, Western broncho-busters, Eastern log-birlers, lumberjacks, unspirited Cockneys, Cree-Scot half-breeds, wealthy scions or "remittance men" who do not need their pay, time-expired soldiers from every branch of the imperial service, side by side with the French Canadian born "t'ree days below Kebek." But the gentleman-rankers are the predominating influence of the corps, and they set the fashion in mufti and manners.

A compelling factor making for dignity and decency in a border country as big as Europe is this comparative small band of red-coated riders, spurring singly across the unbroken prairies with sealed orders and turning up just when most wanted. While such modern inventions as the airplane, radio and motorcycle have greatly

Oath of the ROYAL NORTH-WEST MOUNTED POLICE

"I solemnly swear that I will faithfully, diligently, and impartially execute and perform the duties required of me as a member of the Royal North-West Mounted Police Force, and will well and truly obey and perform all lawful orders and instructions which I shall receive as such, without fear, favor, or affection of or toward any person. So help me, God."

aided the Constabulary in certain aspects of its work, the far-flung out-trails must still be covered on horseback or in dogsleds.

The beat of the Mounted Policeman is from Hudson Bay to the Pacific, and from the forty-ninth parallel to the frozen Arctic, and he does not take tips or sleep on duty. You cannot bulldoze him, you cannot bluff him, and it is not exactly safe to try and "fix" him. Stories of his bravery and daring are recounted everywhere, but it is a singular fact that his heroic deeds seldom get into print. Yet it is strikingly true that on the margin of every page of the unwritten history of this great, lone land the figure of this solitary horseman is vignetted.

IN 1870 the Hudson Bay Company gave up to the Canadian Government their exclusive rights in "Rupert's Land," that vast open space Northwest of Canada. The intrusion into the then unguarded Indian country of wolves and illicit whiskey traders from the South made it necessary for Canada to send there some body of men empowered to protect the red man from the white man's avarice, to enforce law and order on the frontier, and try the unique experiment of making by moral suasion law-abiding British subjects out of warlike Sioux, Assiniboin, Blood, Ojibways, and Blackfoot.

How far the little force has succeeded in its mission may be judged from the fact that Canada has never seen a lynching, that



THE WASTELANDS

THE HISTORY OF THE R. N. W. M. P.

by KENNETH P. WOOD

she has never had an actual Indian war, and that, with one weak-kneed exception, there has been no holdup of a train within Canadian borders.

An officer of the Mounted Police is not an exponent of the law, he is the law itself. When he rides his horse to foot-hill camp or threads on snow-shoes the worn north trails of the trapper, he goes clad with the authority of courts. He preserves order, but he also makes arrests. He tries offenders in his own courts, and then escorts the evil-doer upon whom sentence has fallen to a prison of his own making, where the law-breaker may be incarcerated for ten days or ten years. Back of that slight, silent, steel-nerved rider is the strong arm of England and the whole of Canadian jurisprudence, and when he speaks, it is as one with authority. In extreme cases, when the death penalty has to be enforced, one constable may have to act as clergyman, executioner, and coroner.

The newly-recruited "mountie" or "buck" as he calls himself, receives approximately a soldier's stipend, his term of engagement is five years, and he may look forward to re-enlistment for a second term at a slight increase in pay. Recruits must be between the ages of twenty-one and forty, active men of thoroughly sound constitution and possessed of certificates of



exemplary character. They must be able to read and write either English or French, understand horses, ride well, measure up to the minimum height of five feet, eight inches, have a chest measurement of thirty-five inches, weight not over 175 pounds, and be unencumbered with a wife. If the buck meets these requirements he exchanges his name for a number.

There is scarcely a department of the Canadian Government service that is not assisted by these judges in red coats. As veterinaries they aid the Department of Agriculture by dipping every doubtful head of stock that comes across the border. They act as escorts to the officials carrying treaty-money to Indians at the time of annual payment. They guard from theft the crown timber reserves, and make complete weather reports for the Meteorological Office. Mounted Policemen are called upon to be physicians and gentle nurses, bailiffs and interpreters. The patrolling mountie riding his lonely rounds makes Piegan Indian and Swampy Cree keep each to his respective stamping-ground, calls upon Chief Rearing Bear and Eagle Sitting Down to account for every new piebald pony, incidentally stamps out a prairie fire, prevents Mormons from marrying overmuch, and collects taxes in the outlying districts.

The constable sent out to make an ar-

rest must not shoot first. He has no orders to bring in his prisoner "dead or alive." If he brings him in dead he gets three months' imprisonment at hard labor. If he fails to bring him in, though he go single-handed into a hostile Indian camp or a gambling-hell on that errand, he is equally accorded "three months' hard." So the record of the force is one long testimonial of divine tragedies, brave adventures, and impossibilities made facts.

The official "blue books" of the Royal Mounted issued by the Government at Ottawa are interesting chiefly because of what they do not say. One has to read the romance that lies between the lines of "I beg to report" and "I have the honor to be." The blue book has its origin in the businesslike stub of the pencil with which Constable No. 867 or Corporal No. 451, riding from Cree camp to settler's hut, jots down the condition of the crops, the state of the roads and bridges, the peculiar cattle brand adopted by the last Ruthenian settler, and the amount of gold that the prospector washes out of the sands of the Saskatchewan. The real constituents of the Mounted in the times of peace are rarely heard from. Many of the settlers of western Canada are foreigners; it is a land of distances and solitudes. Wherever in the lonely places a man and wife with their little baggage of loves and sorrows have builded themselves a roof-tree for the sake of their children, there a thought of thanksgiving goes out to the watch-dogs of the wastelands whose untiring vigilance holds them in safety.

DOWN the main street of one of Canada's raw railroad towns struts a mountie. Spick and span from service hat to burnished spurs, you may take him as typical of the corps. While a swagger stride and lift of shoulder hint the devil-may-care, in set chin, arched eyebrow, and thin nostril one reads breeding. The young policeman swears, but he does not lie. He gambles perhaps, with that munificent pay of his, but he does not steal. You may detect the rougher and grosser vices, but his also the more virile virtues. His work has trained down his lean frame. Fatigue and suffering, hunger and thirst and cold, have drawn their marks on the smooth boy face, but there is a ring of command in his voice. He is good to look at. A mere private on the trails, this stripling is a younger son

at home, an American or an Englishman as the case may be, for he possesses equal education and pride of birth with his officer.

Take another view of that jaunty, spurred boy. We come across him doing patrol on the United States border-line, a prairie edge extending 800 miles, with a hinterland of over a million and a half square miles also calling for protection. Dirty and disheveled, his unshaven face suggests a broken-down cowpuncher. He may be dirty, but his mount is not, and his accoutrements are immaculate. To the smuggler and horse-thief he looks extremely businesslike.

Catch another silhouette. It is winter; we see the youngster trailing his narrow flat-sled among the ice hummocks and muskegs of the Far North, breathing the icy air of the Arctic. The frozen-in Norwegian whaler on Herschel Island and the fur-clad Kogmollyc at the door of his winter igloo equally respect him. Over in the Klondike, the land of cruelty and cupidity, where even the kindly become bitten with the chilling lust for gold, the mountie is the sane adjuster of things. Let a man's cache be rifled or his sluice-box tampered with, the quick feet of this officer bring the miscreant to justice. No "bad man" in the Yukon amuses himself by "shooting up" the town—it is not healthy amusement. On five minutes' notice the constable starts off fifty miles over ice and snow to carry rations to starving miners or give burial to an out-cast Jewish peddler. It is the husky-drawn sled of the police that carries to farthest claim the letters from the outside world more precious than the much sought-after gold.

A FUGITIVE once fled from a ghastly murder committed in the Klondike, and the sleuths immediately took up the chase. For nearly a year they followed their man. The newspapers had little to say about it, for the Mounted Police are silent riders. It is capture, not kudos, that they are after. South from White Horse the constables dogged the murderer, picking up their first clue in a little logging camp on Puget Sound. The fugitive was trailed from Seattle to Butte, thence to Spokane, and north to Rossland, British Columbia. Then down at Ogden, Utah, we again see Canada's watch-dogs and they are moving toward the Nevada-California line. Finally the hunted man was run down to earth at

Laredo, Texas, where, waiving extradition, he was taken to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and put on board a British ship. The only vessel in the harbor flying the Union Jack was bound for Jamaica, so prisoner and police embarked for that island, and took ship from there to Halifax. At Halifax the strong arm of Canadian law was laid upon the Klondike killer, and he had to face the consequences of his deed. There is but one thing on this planet longer than the equator, and that is the arm of British justice.

As the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company was throwing its trans-continental spine across Canada through Indian territory, 4,000 laborers worked on construction. The red men looked askance at the track-laying. Would their lands be taken from them? Were the rails bad medicine to scare off the last of the buffalo? Old Chief Piapot's tepee stood in direct line of the rails, and Piapot brusquely announced that there his wigwam would remain.

The C. P. R. appealed to the Lieutenant-Governor, and he turned over the complaint to the headquarters of the Mounted. Headquarters ticked its orders, and immediately two smart red-coats, forage hats balanced jauntily on the three traditional hairs, trotted briskly into Piapot's camp—two men to bring two hundred armed braves into subjection! Even the stolid Indians saw the absurdity and shouted with derision. One of the two mounties wore on his sleeve a sergeant's triple chevron, and this one, pulling up his service pony before Piapot's lodge, read aloud his written orders: The Indians must strike tent and take trail to the northward.

The chief demurred. The sergeant in quiet tones told Piapot he had exactly fifteen minutes in which to obey orders, and drew out his watch to check the seconds. The camp became a stirred-up ant-hill, braves mounted their rearing broncs and jostled the horses of the police, while Indian maids laughed, young bucks sneered, and beldames chuckled.

The officer and his assistant were motionless figures. With the tick of the fifteenth minute, the sergeant tossed his reins to the constable, jumped off his horse, and clanked over to Piapot's wigwam. He spoke no word, but with dramatic deliberation kicked down the keypole of Piapot's tent. A yell of crazed rage was followed by a closing-in of the mounted Indians and a

display of firearms, and standing in the midst of it all was a youthful sergeant, and back of him his red-coat comrade on horseback.

Piapot was doing the thinking as the sergeant with extraordinary sangfroid went down the line and with military precision knocked out the keypole of each tepee as he passed it, ignoring the shouts of the mob, and following with intuitive insight the workings of the mind of the outraged chief. Piapot was no man's fool. He, too, could read character. Though no word had been spoken, it was a duel of self-control between redskin and red-coat, and each in a stern school had learned his lesson of repression.

The chief concluded that he had either to plunge his spear into the breast of the whole British Empire by the murder of these two stripling police, so exasperating in their unruffled dignity, or call off his war-dogs and move away. He chose the latter course, for Piapot had brains. During the first year of work not a single crime was committed along the construction line of the Canadian Pacific, a record that stands unparalleled in railroad-building throughout unorganized frontier lands.

TO North Portal "blew in" recently, with the avowed intention of "showing them a thing or two," one Cowboy Jack, a tough customer. The guard book account tells the story with the briefness of a Napoleonic despatch:

On the 21st inst., I, Corporal No. 690, was called into the local hotel to quiet a disturbance. The room was full of cowboys, and one John Riley, or Cowboy Jack, was carrying a revolver and pointed it at me, against Sections 105 and 109 of the Criminal Code. We struggled. Finally I got him handcuffed and took him outside. His head being in bad shape I had to engage the services of a doctor, who dressed the wound and pronounced it not serious. To the doctor Riley said that if I had not grabbed his gun there would have been another death in Canadian history. All of which I beg to report.

(Signed) E. E. DEVERAUX, Corporal.

Note that succinct sentence of the corporal's "We struggled."

NOT so many years ago two chechakos entered the Lesser Slave Lake country, ostensibly prospecting for gold. The returning Indian guides who had been unexpectedly and prematurely discharged

said that one of the prospectors insisted upon traveling alone. The answers given by this man regarding his "lost" companion were not satisfactory, and he was arrested, and there began one of the most splendid bits of detective work of which Canada has full record.

Sergeant No. 423 turned over the ashes of a camp-fire, and found three hard lumps of flesh, and a small piece of skull bone. In front stretched a little slough, or lake, which seemed a likely place in which to look for evidence. Setting Indian women to fish up with their toes any hard objects they might feel in the ooze, the sergeant secured a stick-pin of unusual make and a small pocket-book. He systematically drained the lake, and found a leather boot with a broken-eyed needle sticking in it. The camp-fire ashes, examined with a microscope, yielded the missing part of a needle's broken eye, and established unmistakable connection between lake and camp.

The makers of the stick-pin in London were communicated with by cable, and the Canadian Government summoned all the way from England the missing man's brother in order to identify the scant evidence on hand. Link by link the chain grew. It took eleven months for the sergeant to complete his data and shape up the case. The Mounted Police brought from Lesser Slave Lake forty Indian and half-breed witnesses. The evidence was placed before the jury, and the Indians returned to their homes. A legal technicality cropping up, the trial had to be repeated in its entirety, and once more those forty men, women, and children left their traps and fishing nets and came into Edmonton to tell their story.

The result was that the accused prospector was found guilty of murder, and paid the death penalty. The trial cost the Government of Canada over \$30,000—all to avenge the death of one of the many wandering units to be found in every corner of the silent places, an unknown gold-seeker.

GOLDEN in British Columbia was a dry town, but the miners were not dry by choice. To the lot of Sergeant No. 727 came instructions that to the average minion of the law would be a large order. Times were good, but there was nothing to celebrate with. One hard-bitten sourdough

evolved a scheme to relieve the situation and incidentally fill his pockets with gold dust. He ordered a whole carload of whiskey. In due course it arrived, and all the friendly customers were there. The man was artistic, and would make a ceremony of opening the first case. About him stood and sat the miners, a couple of hundred strong, thirsty and anticipative.

At this juncture in clinked the sergeant and one constable, with telegraphed orders to "destroy all whiskey in Golden." As well send two little children to corral coyotes or pasture wolves, it would seem. But despite snarls and the threat of guns, Sergeant No. 727 spilled that unlawful liquor in the face of those lawless and thirsty men, and, as Cromwell said when he expelled the Long Parliament, "not a dog barked."

A LOUCHEUX INDIAN is now serving a life sentence within a Canadian prison. This red man was a fur-trapper beyond the Arctic Circle and had a two-year-old baby. He took the infant to an island and there abandoned it to die of starvation. A mountie heard the story from the Indians, followed the culprit to a point nearer the Pole than many explorers reach, and got his man. He was taken to the nearest post of the Constabulary, and then sent outside for trial. To his capturer was given the task of conveying the arrested man to the Barracks at Regina. The brave fellow stocked a canoe with provisions, and the long and hazardous journey up the Mackenzie River began.

For 1,200 miles the little procession pushed its way along that silent stream. Picture the grim couple in the canoe. At the bow the Indian, a manacled murderer, looking forward to a life term behind prison walls. At the stern, paddle in hand, one lonely policeman representing outraged *Pax Britannica*, the Nemesis of that poor little baby whose dying wails in the North no human ear had heard.

Great Slave Lake was crossed, the Smith Rapids passed, Athabasca Lake and Athabasca River, and the hundred miles of portage that lead to Edmonton and the Saskatchewan. The railroad took accuser and accused into Regina, where Constable No. 307 handed over his prisoner, saluted, and fell back three paces. He had no report to make; there were no commendations, no fireworks—it is the way of the Mounted.

(Continued on page 124)

AROUND *the* TOTEM POLE



The purpose of this department is to help the readers of REAL NORTHWEST ADVENTURES make friends with people everywhere. We encourage correspondence. Just write to Corporal Smith at Room 203, 100 Hudson Street, New York City, and sign your own name or nickname. We'll print your letter, and if you don't want your address to appear, send it confidential to us, and we will forward all answers to you.

So come on, pick yourself a pen pal from those listed below; they're all anxiously awaiting your letters.

LIKES TO WRITE LETTERS

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am writing in a plea for "Pen Pals." I am 5 ft. 7½ in., blonde, and 17 years of age. I am a maid in a large home. I like writing letters, seeing hockey games, and movies, and meeting new friends. Please write, I promise to answer.

(MISS) IRENE WOOD.

55 Rosemont Ave.,
Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

GOOD FOOTBALL PLAYER

Dear Corporal Smith:

I think your magazine is the tops. I wonder if you can find room for me on your page as I would like to exchange letters from Alaska, Canada, the West and Northwestern part of the U. S.

I am a young fellow of 18 years. Have blonde hair, blue eyes, 5 ft. 9 in. tall, and weigh 154 lbs. I am considered fairly good looking. I enjoy all kinds of sports. My favorite is football, for which I got a high rating for two years while playing for the High School. I will gladly exchange letters with boys and girls. Even though my state is small, there is plenty I can tell you about.

So come along, fellows and girls, and let me know something about your state and country.

ED. BROPHY.

Shannock, R. I.

EX-MEDICAL STUDENT

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am twenty-five, six feet, working nights in a hospital, am a medical student, but am not in school at present. After my general routine work some nights I have quite a bit of time I could correspond. Preferably with the opposite sex. I am very active in most athletics and sports and love the outdoors.

Please help me pass along dark nights in pleasant correspondence. I am anxiously waiting.

LESTER HARRIS.

Bonnie Burns M. H.,
Scotch Plains, N. J.

Dear Corporal Smith:

I've just finished REAL NORTHWEST ADVENTURES and I think it's swell. So I would like

to join your Totem Pole. I am 18. Dark brown hair, 5 ft. 4 in. tall, weigh 125 lbs. I like all sports. Would like to trade snapshots. So come on, boys and girls. Please write. I will answer all letters.

Yours truly,
JAMES L. WHITNEY.

2201 Lawndale,
Apartment 308,
Detroit, Mich.

PREFERS RED HEADS

Dear Corporal Smith:

Here's a lonely fellow in a C. C. C. Camp up here in Northern Vermont.

I am 19 years old, blue eyes and light complexion. Like everything from hiking to traveling.

I have nobody to write to, so you pen pals get busy and write a lonely guy, especially red-headed girls with brown eyes.

I promise to write faithfully.

ELLIOT F. ROCKWELL.

Camp Charles M. Smith,
Co. 1136, C. C. C.,
Waterbury, Vermont.

A MOHAWK TRAILER

Dear Corporal Smith:

How are the chances of becoming a member of your Pen Pal Club? I read every issue of your magazine, and think the stories are "tops," in other words splendid.

I am especially interested in hearing from the western states, but assure you that all letters received from anywhere, whether it be the east or west, will be welcome and answered as promptly as possible.

I am 23 years of age, have light brown hair, and blue eyes, stand six feet two and weigh 182 lbs. My hobbies are too numerous to mention, so I will condense them down, and say that I am interested in the outdoor sport and hiking. I have covered about every trail in the Mohawk Valley. I'm willing to tell a few things about it, to those who are interested.

I sincerely hope this letter finds a place in your magazine and if it does, thanks a million.

I will close, hoping to hear from some of the other readers within the near future.

HAROLD L. NELLIS.

27 North Division St.,
St. Johnsville, N. Y.

POET AND AUTHOR

Dear Corporal:

I am a poet and author (nearly three hundred poems published here and abroad, five stories—guess that qualifies me). 37 years old. I am interested in hearing from literary inclined folks.

Have lived a life of action and adventure and much of my poetry is action ballads of the desert, the north country and the sea. Spent two years in the Hudson Bay country and know the whine of brittle snow when I hear it.

ROBERT TAD PHILLIPS.

Caliente, Calif.

[Corp.: Am writing this damned thing from a hospital bed—hence the doners.] N. W. A. stories splendid and I enjoyed them to the last word.

"CAN YOU HELP HIM OUT?"

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am very interested in the life of a Mountie, and I don't know a thing about how to get into the service or what the requirements are. I would appreciate it very much if you would write to me and tell me all about the Mounties.

My education consists of two years of Senior High School. Have been a Pennsylvania National Guard for 3 years and have an excellent discharge. This is my third year in the U. S. Army. Am a qualified gunner in the Coast Artillery Corps, and an expert observer. Am a member of the only All-American Jiu-Jitsu class in the world that wrestles pure Japanese Jiu-Jitsu. We also wrestle "Sumo" which is Jiu-Jitsu "catch as catch can." I am an assistant instructor in Judo.

I am interested in this line of service because I love the outdoors. Thanking you.

Respectfully yours,

RUSSEL ROMANO.

WESTERNERS WANTED

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am a reader of your magazine and I think it is the best, and most interesting, the Real Northwest Adventure. So "Corporal" will you please put this in the February issue. I am a boy of 17 and have brown hair and brown eyes. I would like most to hear from cowboys and cowgirls from Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Arizona. So you Pen Pals come out of the shade and write to me and I will promise to exchange photos and songs.

Pen Pal,

JESSE H. FEHLMAN.

Kelton, Utah.

"EX-MOTORCYCLIST"

Dear Corporal:

Am more or less a newcomer among the readers of R. N. A., but assure you I enjoy the stories very much, and being a reader of your interesting mag. I would like to enter my plea for Pen Pals.

Am a young married man, 25, printer by trade, and pretty much of an out-of-doors fellow. Am planning on a trip West soon and would like to strike up some Pen Pals to visit along the way. Any one, either married couples or single fellows, out in Iowa, N. and S. Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Colorado, please take notice! Also am an ex-motorcyclist (have been to the west coast via motorcycle), and my hobbies are small game hunting, snap-shot coloring and bird study, also do quite a bit of ice skating and skiing. So come on you printers, Westerners (or Easterners), 'chuck hunters, photo-tinters, bird lovers or amateur outdoorsmen! Someone, please.

Sincerely,

ROLAND MERCER.

351 Clay Street,
Hagston, Indiana.

DON'T SAY MUCH

Dear Corporal Smith:

I haven't any special talents but I can write an intelligent letter and there's nothing I like better than to receive a letter. Please publish my plea for some Pen Pals. Thank you.

DOROTHY EDMONDS.

341 3rd Avenue N.,
Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

VERY AMBITIOUS!

Dear Corporal Smith:

Here comes a sad plea from cold Saskatchewan for a million Pen Pals. So let 'em come, eh. I am 24 years old, 6 ft. tall, and curly blond hair, and a real baseball fan, but like dancing and hunting.

This being my first Real Northwest mag. I have sure taken a notion to them as top notch, so send out my SOS for help, asking every one to write. Please don't fail.

GORDON SCOTT.

Fulching, Saskatchewan.

INFORMATION WANTED

Dear Corporal Smith:

I have just finished reading REAL NORTHWEST ADVENTURES. I think it is the best magazine I have ever read. I think it ought to be published monthly. I know there are lots of letters besides mine, so please try to publish my letter for Pen Pals as soon as possible.

I am 21 years old, 5 ft. 7½ in. tall, and dark brown hair and brown eyes, and I weigh 150 pounds.

I want Pen Pals from Canada especially. But I will be glad to hear from any country. I want to hear from anyone who is interested in the Mounted Police of Canada. I will be very glad to receive all the information I can on them. So come on you Pen Pals, let's see how long a letter you can write.

I would like to hear from girls too, who are interested. I will try to answer all letters.

Yours truly,

FLOYD HECKATHORN.

125 Latimer Ave.,
Strabane, Pa.

THREE LITTLE MAIDS ARE WE

Dear Corporal Smith:

How about three young girls who want many Pen Pals. Write a few lines in your magazine. We enjoy the stories very much. Come on Pals, drop us a line. Would like to hear from foreign countries or any place, no matter age or race.

Dorothy is 24 yrs. old, has blond hair, blue eyes, 5 ft. 4 in. tall, nationality Swede. Ellenora is 21 yrs. old, has dark blond hair, brown eyes, 5 ft. 5½ in. tall, nationality Swede. Lucille is 17 yrs. old, has brown hair, brown eyes, 5 ft. 4 in. tall, nationality Irish and Spanish.

MISS DOROTHY DAHLEEN.

MISS ELLENORA DAHLEEN.

307 Grange Ave.,
Des Moines, Ia.

MISS LUCILLE MOURNING.

R. R., Swan, Ia.

"PEN PAL IN WANT"

Dear Corporal:

Gosh, you sure have a swell magazine. I like it very much.

Now about my mail box; it is empty. How about helping me to get a few Pen Pals? I'm a boy of 18, have brown hair and blue eyes. I would like to hear from girls between the ages of 14 and 19. I will answer every letter that I receive and the very same day that I receive them. Now, come on Pen Pals, write. I'll be looking for plenty of letters. I'll exchange snapshots also.

A Pen Pal in want,

ELMER PLUCK, JR.

Route 4, Willowdale,
Coatesville, Pa.

"A COUPLE O' ROLLER SKATERS"

Dear Corporal Smith:

We have just got through reading your magazine and think it is swell.

We would like to hear from Pen Pals, especially girls between the ages of 15 to 20.

My brother Jim is 5 ft. 10 in. tall, weighs 155, gray eyes, brown hair, 20 years old.

I am 5 ft. 11 in. tall, weigh 165 lbs., brown eyes, black hair, 19 years old.

Our favorite sports are roller skating in rinks, baseball, basketball, football, golf, tennis, ice skating and swimming.

Will exchange photographs with anyone who wishes to.

CLIFF & JIM BERGBAUER.

1379 Garfield Pl., Elizabeth, N. J.

"WORKS ON A RANCH"

Friend Corporal Smith:

Have just finished my first copy of your magazine, and I assure you it will not be my last.

I was very pleased to find your "Pen Pal" section. I am a very lonely young man and think you might be able to help me.

I am 5 ft. 9 in. tall, weigh around 165 lbs., brown eyes, brown hair, and you might add, if you won't think it egotistic of me, considered fairly good looking.

Will gladly exchange snaps with anyone who would be good enough to write to me. I live in the shadow of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, in the center of California, work on a ranch, and love to hunt, fish, hike and all sports. The outdoors and the pine forests are my favorite retreat.

Thanking you in advance, would you please forward my answers, if any, through your office, please. I am,

Sincerely yours,

BILL GARRISON.

"YOUNG MAN, 25"

Dear Corporal:

I have been reading your mag. for quite a while and have really enjoyed its stories. This is my first try for Pen Pals, so please don't turn me down, for my letter does not look so good in the teaste paper basket. I would like to have pals from all over the world and I promise to answer everyone.

I am a young man 25 years old, 5 ft. 9 in. tall and weigh 163 lbs. I have dark hair and eyes. Come on Pals and fill the mail box.

Sincerely yours,

ERVEN MAIER.

1024 Pine St.,
Waukegan, Ill.

DOUBLE READER

Dear Corporal Smith:

I would very much like to have a few Pen Pals from all over the world. I am 18 yrs. old, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, weigh 160 lbs., am interested in sports of all kinds. Pen friends please send photo and I will return mine.

I enjoyed your story about "A Son of the Circle" very much, but your books are rather hard to get over here, still I make up for it when I do get one, because I read it twice.

Well, come on you girls and boys, write to another reader of your favorite paper.

WALTER BRITTLE.

20 Kent Street

North Walsall,

Walsall, Staffordshire, England.

"CURLEY HEAD"

Dear Corporal:

I am so very lonesome for someone to write to. I have always read your "Totem Pole" mail box. I really enjoy the letters, but now I want to get some letters of my own. Please help me by printing this.

I am a young girl of 19, 5 ft. 1 in., weight 102, have brown curly hair, and brown eyes. Like to do most everything, especially roller skating.

I will exchange snapshots with everyone that answers.

GLADYS THROSEL.

146 N. Jackson St.,
Waukegan, Ill.

IN THE FLOOD ZONE

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am a lonely boy of 18 years, am 5 ft. 6 in. tall, weigh 125 lbs., black hair and hazel brown eyes.

I would like to correspond with some nice girls.

I am considered one of the best looking chaps in my neighborhood.

I work every day but at present due to flood conditions I am unable to attend my position.

I like to play golf, basketball, football, baseball, dance, swim and also like shows.

Kindly publish this letter in your magazine.

ARTHUR RALENKOTTER.

416 Buckner St.,

Erlanger, Ky.

P. S.—My nickname is "Chis."

"SWALLOWED A DICTIONARY"

Dear Corporal Smith:

After several moments of intricate meditation, during which time I almost overtaxed my limited mental capacities in the procedure of dissolving two objections, I had in writing a letter to you and fellow perusers of your fine magazine, I finally overcame them.

The first doubt which confronted me was to whether the time, paper, stamps and other essentials of letter writing would be equal to any benefits I might derive. Subsequently, however, my gambling blood overcame my inherent Scottish thrift and I decided to write. Besides, I have plenty of time, am using my sister's paper and pen, and have purloined one of dad's stamps. Hence, I have no fear that the expenditures will cause my Scottish half any undue pangs of conscience.

However, before I started I was undecided about the second objection, which in short was: there being numerous aspirants for "Pen Pals," can I write a letter interesting enough to induce a few girls and boys to write me? Being of an inferiorly-complexed nature I entertain doubts. However, I decided to write anyhow—and, as you can perceive—I am.

From previous study of correspondence it seems a popular inclination to use the color of one's hair as a description of preferred Pen Pals. And not being any different, I would like to hear from blonds, brunettes, red-heads, and dyed-heads.

As I deem it essential to attempt a fair description of my physical appearance before hoping for letters I will—even though blushing furiously. I am 20 years old and if I were 7 feet tall I'd be a foot taller than I am now. If I weighed 500 pounds I would be in a side-show—but I don't. One hundred fifty-five includes my red flannels. I have black, curly hair, brown eyes, like all athletics, dancing, "swing" music, travelling, etc.

I believe I can write far more interesting letters if you will give me a chance. Will you write?

Fervently hoping this avoids the waste basket, I am

Sincerely,

BURTON "LEFTY" JAMES.

E. Cedar Street,
Franklin, Kentucky.

"SPORTS FAN"

Dear Corporal Smith:

I am a sophomore in High School and would like very much to hear from Pen Pals all over the world.

I have brown hair and eyes and am 5 ft. 4½ in. tall. I like all kinds of sports and also like to dance.

I would like to hear from boys and girls between 15 and 19 years of age. I am also willing to exchange snapshots and photos.

ANNA SARACENO.

Terrace Street,
Haworth, N. J.

"LONESOME WIDOW"

Dear Corporal Smith:

Think your magazine is swell. I wonder if you could find room for me in your page as I would welcome Pen Pals from anywhere. Opposite sex preferred.

I am 40 years old, auburn hair, hazel eyes, not bad to look at, like a good time, don't drink, so come on someone and cheer up a lonesome widow.

IVA F. RING.

P. O. Box 164,
Orange, Mass.

"BLOND, BLUE EYES"

Dear Corporal Smith:

This is the first time I have tried to crash your club. I am blond, with blue eyes, age 16, height 5 ft. 5, weight 115 lbs.

Would like to hear from anyone between the age of 16 and 20.

Am not so good at writing letters but will try to answer to all who write.

My hobby is stamp collecting.

MARY E. HANSEN.

Route No. 4,
Amery, Wisconsin.

(Continued from page 120)

THE official maxim of the force is "Maintien le droit," which the constable freely translates into "Go where you are sent."

Winter closing in, one hard-riding youth was sent on two hours' notice to hunt up stray horses in the Pend d'Oreille. It is cold in winter on the prairie, biting, stinging cold. There is more than frost-bite to fear. With the breath of the blizzard come the chilling of the heart and brain—then coma, delirium and death. The lone rider knew this, and, knowing it, exulted in the very danger. He stroked his pony's neck, whispered into its ear, and moved his numbing feet in the stirrups. "Better watch out, old boy, and not let your feel ball up in this coming blow," he murmured as his thoughts wandered homeward to the cozy fireplace

and the pleasant faces of his elderly parents. And just then the blizzard struck him. Out of the North it came, and the eyeballs of horse and rider were pierced by the driving bits of ice-steel.

When the first flowers were pushing their furry heads through the snow debris and dried leaves the next spring, a grizzled member of the force on patrol in the wastelands rode into a cut-off coulee, and there his eye caught the glint of a red uniform. but let us read the lad's own obituary. The officer picked it up under the skeleton that a timber wolf had stripped, scribbled on a page torn from a pocket diary: "Lost. Horse dead. Am trying to push ahead. Have done my best."

Such are the sentinels of the solitudes in whom the Canadian Government put implicit faith.

THE TRADING POST

Here is where the readers of REAL NORTHWEST ADVENTURES can exchange something they have, but do not want, for something that someone else may have and that you may want. This is a free service, but your announcement must not exceed 28 words. It must be understood that REAL NORTHWEST ADVENTURES is not responsible for losses sustained. Print your announcement clearly. Nothing but bona fide "swaps" will be inserted. No sales. Enclose clipping of this announcement with your "swap."

Want Short HiSpeed Woodsman, 16 pump or double, Remington 22 Fieldmaster rifle, Weaver rifle scope. A. Welker, 406 No. Harvey, Oak Park, Ill.

Have guns, revolvers, old clock, old coins, etc. Want Indian relics, violins, etc. Send your list and get mine. E. B. Campbell, R. No. 1, Box 88, Tullahoma, Tenn.

Have 5 volumes Library of Freemasonry, illustrated, leather bound. Also 50 fiction books and 200 magazines: Detective, Western Adventures, etc. Want low speed, 6-volt generator or offers. Max Belz, Waldoboro, Me.

Will swap Stamps, stamp for stamp, quality for quality. Send 100 with return 3c. postage, and I will send like amount. L. C. Fuller, Pinehurst, North Carolina.

Swap: Saxophone and case, cap shotgun, sword cane, camp stove, 1659 book, mounted deer heads. Want: Firearms, portable typewriters, old stamps on envelopes, or what? StJohn, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Have forty late western magazines, five pairs of riding breeches, two khaki tropical uniforms, light small car in excellent running condition. Would like small trailer. Jean G. Malleux, Box 88, Watertown, Mass.

Have electric engineering course, Eastman kodak 2 1/4 by 3 1/4, German bayonets, printing press, revolver, electric razor, rubber boat inflated, motor, Remington & Oliver typewriters. Want radio or. J. Steel, Box 107, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Diamond rings, 75 pounds solder, 500 articles for scrap gold, pistols, saxophone, bird stones, broken watches, yellow cases, coins, sterling silver eggs, honey. Foeller, 3117 Brigham, Toledo, Ohio.

100 magazines, 1 Argosy printed July, 1905, 31 years old. Want Carl Zeiss & Hensoldt 8 power grey army field glasses and new condition Winchester or Remington 5-shot, 22-bolt action clip magazine or repeater action. S. M. Smith, Luretha, Ky.

What do you want for correspondence courses, scouting, sports and athletic goods, stamp albums, stamps, magazines, books, novelties, etc. R. Yates, Laurel Hill, Coleraine, County Derry, Ireland.

Will exchange picture cards, 3 1/2"x2 1/4", views of Australian towns and scenery for cards of other countries. Cards must be only 3 1/2"x2 1/4" in size. A. M. Prior, New Moonta, Old Australia.

Have a 45-70 rifle, good shape. Will trade for stamps or stamp collection. R. E. Brittain, R. D. No. 1, Mogadore, Ohio.

Have approximately 200 formulas. Worth \$50. Trade lot for typewriter, or correspondence courses, or Encyclopedia Britannica, or archery equipment, or taxidermy course. C. Edmonds, Kaimata, Taranaki, N. Z.

Wanted: Radio or train equipment, electric. I have coins, stamps, magazines, books, flashlights, pens, small size boxing gloves, camera, and gun. Peter Messer, 2011 D St., Bellingham, Washington.

Have engravings dated 1789, N. W. taxidermy course, U. S. school banjo course, oil paintings, plants, vases, electric clock, others. Want old guns, swords, Indian pottery, coins, bronze and marble statuary, plants. Stanley Pytel, 5025 Ogden Ave., Cicero, Ill.

Trade these three valuable money-making formulas, shaving cream, tooth paste, chewing gum, for 100-shot air pistol, or 1,000 different stamps, or course on ju-jitsu. G. Edmonds, Kaimata, Taranaki N. Z.

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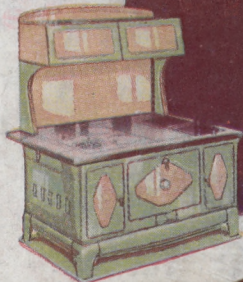
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